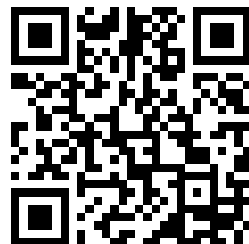


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*The furniture of our  
forefathers*

Esther Singleton, Russell Sturgis











THE  
FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS



PART V  
NEW ENGLAND FROM 1700 TO 1776  
IMPORTED AND HOME-MADE PIECES OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS : : NEW YORK







**THE FURNITURE  
OF OUR   
FOREFATHERS**





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**SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS**

*Owned by Mr. George Dudley Seymour, New Haven, Conn. See page 343.*

Vol 2.



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

By ESTHER SINGLETON

WITH CRITICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PLATES  
By RUSSELL STURGIS

ILLUSTRATED

PART V

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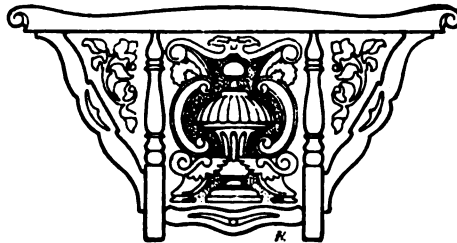
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WITH CRITICAL NOTES ON MANY OF  
THE PLATES BY RUSSELL STURGIS

ALL THE NOTES FURNISHED BY MR. STURGIS  
ARE FOLLOWED BY HIS SIGNATURE.

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## SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS      FRONTISPIECE

Tall-boy in which the chief attraction is the somewhat rich veneer of the drawer fronts. The very unusual design of the six legs and the odd straining pieces between them may also be noticed.

The large flat drawer forming the lowermost part of the upper half of this tall-boy can only be opened by pressure from below, or by taking out one of the other drawers, undoubtedly the large one immediately above it. This is what ladies to-day call the "slipper drawer," but it is another form of "secret drawer," which drawers, indeed, are seldom much more secret than this one. They serve as nothing more unusually secure than merely to baffle ordinary curiosity. Some such tall-boys have a large and shallow drawer in the cornice, the mouldings of which pass through the drawer-front itself, and such drawers are excellent for papers—for a map, a print or two, for anything, in short, that is better left flat without being folded.

A certain well-known professor of Yale College—for he did not live to see and to use the title Yale University, however much the thing itself may have existed in his time—made for himself a writing table, useful and even comely, by taking apart a tall-boy not wholly unlike that shown in the frontispiece and having a panelled and cloth-covered top made to stretch from one to the other of these parts. That incident merely illustrates the possibility and the frequency of such changes in the arrangement of those valuable pieces of furniture. In this case the upper part of the supposed tall-boy may have been still for use in a nursery while the lower part passed as a low-boy in a spare room. R. Sturgis.

## KITCHEN IN THE ROOMS OF THE CONCORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY      FACING 315

The room itself shows little of its original character except in the girders of the ceiling, the opening of the fireplace and the oven, of which the door and the mouth of the ash-pit are seen on the left of the fireplace. There are a number of interesting utensils in the room; a lantern of pierced sheet metal, like one which is to be seen in the illustration page 351, and a leather fire-bucket—both of these hanging from the girder above; a good spinning wheel at the left hand with more than the usual refinement in the way of moulded and turned work, and on the right, a winder for skeins of yarn. The rocking-chair is a piece of domestic or at least of village manufacture, and its heavy and simple make affords an interesting contrast to the more delicately finished city made pieces. There are also two very plain settles, but these perhaps of later date as they are made of sawed and plain boards. Hardly greater refinement of finish marks the case of drawers on the right in which an attempt has been made to imitate some of the decorative effects of the more elaborate low-boys of which there are several illustrated in this Part; see pages 326, 342 and others. Hand-made tools are shown in abundance, hanging along the front of the mantel or set upon the shelf; such are the broadaxe of which the handle has been sawed off, and the hammer wrought out of thin iron and fitted to a wooden frame which is seen further to the right, as well as the admirable and interesting spring tongs of which there are two pairs, the forks for meat, and the bundle of skewers and the steelyard on the extreme left. A

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hand-wrought pick-axe leans against the base of the spinning wheel. There are candlesticks on the mantel-shelf, and one of them has a candle set upon it which is clearly too large for it, and this utensil may be thought to be, if not a rush-light holder (and it is scarcely long enough for that), then a holder for the ordinary dipped candle of the household, which was generally much more slender than our modern factory-made pieces. There is a tin horn—the dinner-horn of the poems and legends—standing on its bell with a tag or label hanging to its mouth-piece. A home-made bootjack reminds us of the days when there were worn what are now called long boots, things which vanished from the city life in western Europe fifty years ago, which lingered in the eastern cities of America until 1870, and which have now “gone West” or to the open country. R. Sturgis.

### TWO MAHOGANY TABLES. SMALL ROUND TABLE. MOLL PITCHER'S TABLE . . . . . FACING 318

Oval table with adjustable top ; middle or close of eighteenth century. The veneering of the top is the chief decorative effect sought in this table, but the standard and the tripod of its base are that which interest the student the most and are to be compared with the similar features in other tables on the same plate. The framing of the spreading branches of this tripod into the central upright piece is unworkmanlike in that the strain is brought on the tenons, if there are any, sidewise; while the actual stress is generally taken up by the friction of the parts assisted by glue. This is, indeed, poor construction but admissible in pieces so small that without cost or labor the parts taking the strain can be enlarged proportionally; and it is this device which has been resorted to in the present case with great ingenuity and good taste. The necessity of making the spreading pieces very wide at their points of junction with the standard has been the excuse for very graceful combinations of curvature.

Table in all respects similar to the above except that it is somewhat more elaborate, having a moulded edge and more finely-worked standard. What was said about the construction of the above applies in all respects to this. The reader may note very slight differences of design in the profiling and chamfering of the under side of these two tables—the points of junction between the spreading feet and the standard in the following offers a third treatment of the same detail.

Table like those above, but with the top of solid woodwork with the whole surface lowered so as to leave a permanent moulding worked out of the solid around the edge and having a tripod base carved with some elaboration. The fancy for a rim around the edge of a table was very strong in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and lasted a long time. The absence of the device in the nineteenth century can hardly be explained except by the rapid abandonment of working in the solid wood. Every cabinet-maker would perceive the feebleness of a planted molding carried around curves—such a thing would hardly meet the requirements of even the most reckless workmen. Perhaps the general demand for tablecloths of decorative intent may have had to do with the abandonment of this very useful feature.

The carving is of the formal sort and adds nothing to our already gained knowledge of such work.

What is noticeable, however, is the slight differences which, in these three tripod standards, give variety of design. It is in this way that all the fine designing of this world, at least as applied to the simple objects of daily life, has been achieved. The artist is satisfied to take a well-known type and then to treat it, in detail, according to his own lights.

Round table like in most respects to that on page 379 and shown from another point of view, that is, with the hinged joints of the leaves plainly visible and the resulting clumsy look of the four legs fully revealed. A table seen in this way is a dislocated-looking thing and requires its concealing cloth. R. Sturgis.

### LEATHER CHAIRS AND BELLOWS . . . . . 318

These are interesting examples of native workmanship of the early eighteenth century, having been made by the Rev. Theophilus Pickering in 1724. This model had already been in use abroad for many years. It occurs in pictures by contemporary artists. E. S.

### OLD GREEN PAINTED AND RUSH-BOTTOM CHAIR . 321

This is a somewhat unusual variety of the four-back chair. It was probably intended for an invalid. E. S.

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| GILT MIRROR AND MAHOGANY DRESSING-TABLE,<br>FACING  | 322  |
| DRESSING-TABLE WITH DRAWERS, AND JAPANED<br>DRESSING-GLASS . . . . . FACING   | 326  |
| <p>Low-boy of a little more variety of design than is shown on page 364. The original scheme probably included the further adornment in the shape of two turned pendants of some kind projecting downward, one on each side of the middle drawer (see page 343). In this piece, as in that on page 367, the good ancient custom of drawers with fronts projecting beyond and lapping over the divisions between the drawer-spaces is maintained. The handles are apparently original, and are of somewhat unusual merit; they are at least more massive than is customary.</p> <p>The dressing-glass, with its standard and drawers to hold toilet articles, has been lacquered in partial imitation of Japanese work, and this fact would seem to connect it with the Netherlands—it can hardly be an English piece. It appears that the basement or lowermost member of this piece is inlaid, and if this is so the piece is almost certainly Dutch. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| MAHOGANY FIELD-BED . . . . .  | 327  |
| <p>A good four-poster bedstead of about 1810. It is assumed that they will never come in again, the four-post bedsteads, because the houses of the future will be warmed and closed, and the curtains will not be asked for; and yet one who loves fresh air has an even more lively current from his open windows the warmer his room is with the heat of a fire. What then do we of the twentieth century put between our sleeping-place and the open windows? A folding screen, usually Japanese because that is cheaper, or of stamped and coloured leather, or even of highly-wrought cabinet work with paintings in Vernis Martin if we are millionaires. Is it now certain that we have done wisely? Is there not something to be said for the bed-curtains? We are not obliged to draw them all four and shut ourselves up as our ancestors did in a nearly air-tight box with only 180 cubic feet of air for perhaps two pair of lungs.</p> <p>The four high posts might be accommodated to the much lower frame of the modern bedstead, with its broad rails intended to contain and conceal the thick spring mattress of the day. The differentiation brought about by this total change in the proportions of your post would be an attractive thing to work over and to work out. Four such posts carrying four rails with a head-board above one of them might then have a tester of any, even the most magnificent textile fabric, or of embossed and gilded leather, and the curtain might hang on one side, or on one side and the foot—for a greater or a less part of the space turned toward the draft of outer air. Enough said—let the next family taking new quarters, if those quarters are not too utterly inadequate as to space, consider the question whether a four-post bedstead would not be a glorious revival in the form suggested above.</p> <p>The dimity valance of the tester is delightful: and still more attractive would be the counterpane, if we could make out the needlework which adorns it. R. Sturgis.</p> |      |
| MAHOGANY LOW CASE OF DRAWERS AND MAHOG-<br>ANY LOOKING-GLASS . . . . .  | 331  |
| <p>A low-boy of considerable elegance elaborately carved on the legs and in the shell-pattern recess in the middle, and with unusually massive brass handles. The peculiar bulging front of the drawers will be found repeated in the tall-boys of the time and in such desks and bookcases as on pages facing 340 and 374. This epoch is about 1750. At that time there had already appeared in France the reaction against the somewhat extravagant shaping of the parts, in architecture and in furniture; a reaction which ended in what we know as the <i>Style Louis Seize</i>, but it took time for such influences to cross the channel and a still longer time for them to pass the ocean from Bristol or Plymouth to Massachusetts Bay.</p> <p>The very large and elaborate tall-boy, which is partly seen in this photograph, is evidently a piece of very great interest. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| CARVED OAK CHAIRS . . . . .   | 333  |
| <p>Two chairs carved in solid oak and probably of the closing years of the seventeenth cen-</p>   |      |

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| <p>ture. Their historical record does not seem to be traceable from so early a period, but they have all the marks of English work of the time of James II. The cane backs are undoubtedly contemporaneous and are not the least precious part of this most interesting brace of chairs; the leather-covered seats are, of course, recent. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| <p><b>CROWN-BACK CHAIR</b> . . . . .</p> <p>One chair, thought to be Dutch and probably of about 1725. The heavier bandy-legged form is generally associated with the Netherlands; the most interesting stretching-pieces are, however, the attractive feature in the chair now under consideration; it is very unusual to see so bold a treatment of that important part of the frame. The student of such things should note carefully the singular independence of the workman who has put his transverse piece as far forward as he could without incommoding the sitter, whose heels would strike them if they were further advanced. This bit of designing has carried with it a singular lack of ordinary cheap symmetry; and the pieces are all the better for that. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 337  |
| <p><b>LOW CASE OF DRAWERS OR DRESSING-TABLE (DARK CHERRY)</b> . . . . .</p>   | 339  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY DESK</b> . . . . . <b>FACING</b></p> <p>A writing-desk similar in its distribution to that facing page 376, but far more elaborate. This is, indeed, one of the best designed pieces of the middle of the eighteenth century that one will be apt to see, and it is, fortunately, in perfect order. It is stated to be of mahogany, and if entirely made of that wood is a rare specimen. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 340  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY TABLE AND CHAIR</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Table with dropping leaves which, when open, are supported by two of the four legs. Tables facing 318 and on page 379 will be found to offer alternative forms of the same general plan. The people of the eighteenth century, less harassed than their successors by carpets covering the whole floor or by rugs always in the way, found little difficulty in revolving the whole of one-quarter part, leg and all, of their table frame. It was curious to see how with the appearance of carpeting in common use to cover the previously naked floors this strenuous and satisfactory plan was abandoned for the feeble bracket no deeper than the top rail of the frame and supported by inadequate hinges. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 341  |
| <p><b>LOW CASE OF DRAWERS</b> . . . . .</p> <p>A low-boy to be compared with those facing page 326 and on page 367, and equally with the first of those showing some evidence of having served as part of a tall-boy. It is not asserted, however, that such pieces were never or even very seldom made separately. The records seem to fail us, for the gossiping chat about such things which is common in our good old families has seldom any basis beyond the narrator's own childish experience. It has sometimes seemed possible that pieces of furniture made for a special household would have the upper members of the tall-boys adjustable to one or more table-like lower parts. The use of the carved shell for the front of the lower drawer marks a distinct step forward in attempted adornment. The middle recess shown in those facing page 326, and on pages 331 and 343, is a far-away reminiscence of the knee-place in a writing-table, and has no practical excuse in the pieces of furniture we are considering beyond the possible convenience of the housewife who sits down to look at the contents of the lower drawers; while, even for this purpose, the distance between the two pendants is insufficient. This piece is of unusually good proportion—an attractive piece of furniture. R. Sturgis.</p> | 343  |
| <p><b>LEATHER TRAVELLING TRUNK</b> . . . . . <b>FACING</b></p> <p>Chest of drawers covered with leather and adorned with broad-headed nails. Such pieces are generally considered travelling chests, but this is extremely doubtful, as there is never found in connection with them any provision for easy transport. The Japanese cabinets identified as intended for the traveling equipage of a Daimio under the old régime were fitted with the most ingenious and practically useful appliances in delicate wrought iron for the insertion of a long bearing-pole, by means of which it could be carried as a <i>palkee</i> is carried, on the shoulders of men. The modern trunk with drawers is never too heavy to be tossed upon the shoulders of the stout porter, nor too bulky for the baggage-car or the</p>   | 344  |

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forward deck of a steamboat. The present piece, however, if it is as it appears, three feet high, four feet four inches long and eighteen inches deep, would be a most formidable chattel for the pack-horse or even the horse-litter or even the carrier's van.

Reasons are given in previous notes to illustrations for supposing that this decoration by means of leather (which might be bright-colored and of a glossy surface, and with brass nails) was a favourite alternative for veneer and varnish and for polychromy. In fact, it was in a sense a revival or survival of that polychromatic painting which we have found to exist not infrequently in the earlier years of the seventeenth century. These considerations, taken in connection with the extremely elaborate pierced metal-work scutcheons and the fantastical design produced by the nail-heads, seem to give to the leather covering decorative rather than a utilitarian purpose. The heavy handles at the end are evidently a nineteenth-century addition. R. Sturgis.

**PART OF A SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS . . . . . 345**

**RUSH-BOTTOM CHAIR . . . . . 348**

The chief interest in this chair lies in the fact that it manifestly belongs to the transitional period between the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century styles. It has an odd combination of turned legs and rail together with the feet that so often appear on the carved-oak cane chairs, while the pierced splat and bowed top-bar belong to the new school. E. S.

**HALL IN THE WARNER HOUSE . . . . . 351**

Hall of a house at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in which are seen two most interesting half-round tables of a type not often seen even in fine collections of eighteenth-century furniture. The lantern of pierced thin metal with added ornaments probably soldered to the surface; and with a movable bottom-piece which pulls out and down enabling the light to be cared for without disturbing the lantern itself—this is even more interesting because so nearly unique. People fifty years old will sometimes remember the pierced tin lanterns of their childhood by which the farmer lighted himself in the stable, the light shining through perforations, small and not clean cut, having indeed the partly separated pieces of tin turned inward, thus preventing the wind, even of a sharp storm, from blowing out the candle. Exquisite Japanese pieces of the same device on the same plan are procurable, but the idea is always the same, that as glass is dear, or if not dear is easily breakable, the solid metal itself elaborately pierced *à jour* is the best substance for a working lantern.

The mysterious effect in the right-hand lower corner is produced by the plain top of a heavy table which conceals the lower part of the door and even of the pilaster on the right side of the wooden archway. R. Sturgis.

**“BEAUFIT” . . . . . FACING 352**

A corner cupboard like that on page 354 and the larger one page 363. It is not a piece of furniture, but a part of the decorative interior fitting of a sitting-room or dining-room; a niche, and finished as a niche with a semi-dome carved into a scalloped shell for its roof, and shelves following the curve of the back. R. Sturgis.

**“BOUFET” FROM THE BARTON HOMESTEAD, WOR-  
CESTER . . . . . 354**

This piece, like the last named, is architecturally a niche having for plan a quarter circle or thereabout, and for its roof a shell-carved semi-dome. R. Sturgis.

**KITCHEN IN THE ROOMS OF THE CONCORD ANTIQUAR-  
IAN SOCIETY . . . . . FACING 354**

This plate shows that side of the Concord kitchen which is opposite the fireplace shown in page 315. There are admirable coppers on the uppermost shelf of the dresser and long rows of pewter plates below as well as tin coffee-pots of the simplest village manufacture, and movable coffee-mills. There is a salt and spice-box for the bread-maker and for the cook generally hung between the dresser and the door-piece. That which is most attractive in the photograph is, however, the table set with its array of wooden plates and

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wooden dish, wooden spoons and what is probably a pewter tankard. These wooden plates are not trenchers in the strict sense of the word. The old English trencher was entirely flat with no standing rim at all or a rim a quarter of an inch wide and rising an eighth of an inch above the perfectly flat uniform surface. Those on this table seem to be an attempt to hew and turn, out of solid wood, plates which should resemble the pewter plates of the earlier time, or the "Delft" plates of the eighteenth century. The table itself is an interesting one with a tripod and standard of very good form and design, which may be compared with those shown at page 318. R. Sturgis.

## BEDROOM IN HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE FACING 358

The excellent bedstead shown in this room may be compared with the one illustrated on page 327. The valance in this case is very elaborate; probably of silk fitted with a broad passementerie. A comparison of the bedposts with their turning and carving as seen in the four examples, page 327, page 372, and page 383, and the present one affords an almost adequate study of the elaborate furniture of the years between 1780 and 1810. In the fireplace of this room there are some very interesting andirons—for this, rather than fire-dogs, was what our New England ancestors called these utensils. R. Sturgis.

## TWO CLOCKS FACING 360

The tall clock is a beautiful example of the ornate japanned work of the eighteenth century. The other is a specimen of the plain native work made for the poorer classes. It was made in 1767 by Richard Manning of Ipswich. E. S.

## MAHOGANY AND GILT MIRROR 360

This is one of a pair of mirrors of medium size. It is richly carved with drapery and floral forms and the gilding produces a very rich effect. E. S.

## BUFFET 363

Corner cupboard: but not in the sense of a piece of furniture, for this is a piece of the interior fittings of an old house with just such "trim" as the neighboring door-pieces would have displayed. It is, therefore, hardly to be judged as a separate design. It once formed part of an interesting room with fitting corresponding semi-architectural members in all its parts. See the illustrations on page 354 and facing page 352. R. Sturgis.

## RUSH-BOTTOM CORNER CHAIR 364

This corner chair is early, probably seventeenth century, and a most interesting piece of turning, the work evidently of a man who cared for his details and their proportions. The only vagary that he has allowed to creep in is seen in the monstrous moldings on the cross-bars below the seat; and these are so discrepant that one ventures to believe them taken from another piece. R. Sturgis.

## DRESSING-TABLE 366

## CARVED AND GILT LOOKING-GLASS AND A DRESSING-TABLE 367

Low-boy or, more probably, lower part of a tall-boy, with a table-top of more recent date applied to it. The grounds for this suggestion are in the apparent lack of an adequate finish and of sufficient weight of wood above the uppermost drawers. If this piece be compared with the more highly finished piece shown facing page 326 the difference is at once evident, for the latter has all the appearance of having been planned as it is shown in the photograph. The drop-handles of this piece and the scutcheons are all, undoubtedly, of the original epoch, but they are not of special interest in design or workmanship.

The mirror hanging on the wall above is not of the same epoch. The frame would seem to be of about 1825. The curious discs below it are nothing but the ends of the metal pins secured to an iron band as seen, and used to support the frame. R. Sturgis.

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| <p><b>MAHOGANY DUMBWAITER AND SQUARE TABLE FACING</b></p> <p>The tripods and standards of these two pieces are similar in design, though apparently not made to match as if forming part of a single set. These tripod feet should be compared with those illustrated in the plate opposite page 318. The term dumbwaiter is the only one which we seem to have in the language of decorative art for such pieces as this; although the same term applies to the much lower and broader or longer piece with casters, which can be run into any part of the room, set beside the hostess or the host, or used as a carving table; and also applied to the modern lift when utilized for the purposes of the dining-room and serving-room. The present piece is rather one for the display of glass or silver intended for use at the dinner then in progress and therefore less a dumb waiter in the proper sense than an adjunct of the buffet or sideboard. R. Sturgis.</p> | 368  |
| <p><b>GOVERNOR JOHN WENTWORTH'S DESK AND BOOKCASE</b></p> <p>This piece is to be compared with the one shown in the illustration opposite page 374. The flat panels of the doors here are more likely to have been a part of the original design than the raised panels of that last named piece, but in either case the front might be filled with glass or with solid wood panelling without other change in the design. The owner of such a piece would sometimes line the glass with curtains to hide the interior; thin green silk was the orthodox material for this purpose, and there are many examples still in existence. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 369  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY LIQUOR-CASE . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>Liquor case with eight square bottles elaborately engraved by the wheel and with cut-glass stoppers. The middle of the case is occupied by a pile of tumblers. It is a pity that we have not one of these decanters separate that the decoration of its body might be visible. F. Sturgis.</p>   | 370  |
| <p><b>EZRA RIPLEY'S WRITING-CHAIR . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>A Windsor chair fitted with reading-stand and arranged especially for a near-sighted man or for one who, being very tall, desired not to bend over his work. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 370  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY CHEST-UPON-CHEST OF DRAWERS . . . . .</b></p> <p>An admirable tall-boy to which the name given in the title especially applies. That name may be thought to be a free translation of the French <i>bahut à deux corps</i>. The piece is indeed two chests of drawers, or, as we should say to-day, bureaux, set one upon the other. The decoration by means of swelling and receding rounds of the whole front, drawers, divisions, base, surbase and all, is a refined example of the same system of adornment which is less successfully carried out in the illustration opposite page 374. The brass handles and scutcheons seem to be original; the whole piece is of unusual richness and importance. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 371  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY BEDSTEAD . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>Four-post bedstead with permanent hangings such as served as lambrequins, in a sense, covering the edges of the thinner curtains which could be drawn to and away and preventing the entrance of draughts at the corners. The hangings in question seem to be Dutch material of about 1740. It is very unusual to see the bedposts terminating below with copies of the bandy legs of tables with claw feet and balls. It is probable that the whole piece is Dutch, and of a date not far removed from that above mentioned.</p> <p>There is hanging on the back of the interesting chair on the right a great calèche of a kind somewhat different from the one seen facing page 155. On the left is what must be a most interesting chest of drawers with secretary. There is a good rag-carpet rug at the foot of the bed. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 372  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY SECRETARY AND BOOKCASE . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>Chest of drawers with writing-desk and bookcase. An unusually elaborate piece of furniture showing all the curious vagaries of design which mark the middle of the eighteenth</p>   | 374  |



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century in England and the Netherlands. The device of modifying the otherwise flat front of a pile of drawers so that it shall have projections and recesses like the front of an architectural pavilion is one which occurs to a designer in great need of a novelty. The natural work of the joiner who is trying to make useful furniture does not lead him into such devices: they are the resource of cabinet-makers trying to stimulate reluctant purchasers of furniture by the prospect of something altogether unexampled. Another step is taken when, as in the present case, the two projections and the recess are terminated at the top with convexly and concavely rounded members which replace the older and more obvious plan of carrying these modulations through the shelf or table-top which terminates the pile of drawers. In the present case still another step has been taken, and the swellings and sinkings, though not continuous, are taken up again and repeated, curve by curve, in the sloping front of the desk—that hinged flap which, when opened, forms the writing-shelf.

As to the cupboard or bookcase above, it is more than likely that the original filling of the doors was glass with light sash bars. So the finish to this upper part would be rich and well imagined for a piece of that not very tasteful epoch. R. Sturgis.

## JAMES BOWDOIN'S DESK . . . . . FACING 376

Chest of drawers with writing-desk attachment, a characteristic specimen of a well-known type. Such a piece,—called secretary, scrutoir, and by various other names,—is the obvious result of the slight literary needs of a farmer or citizen whose house space was more-over limited, hardly allowing him to use three feet by four feet of floor-room for a writing-table which would not be used every day. The fact that these pieces were nearly always of what seems to us now an impossible height, from the floor to the writing-shelf, makes this explanation the more obvious. What kind of high stools the original owner sat upon, or whether he stood at his letter-writing, as he might well have stood while entering items in his expense-book, family history has not made clear. We have such pieces nowadays in our homes, and reduce them to submission to modern requirements by taking off the high feet; though even then they demand a library chair of sometimes unusual height. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD . . . . . 377

## TABLE WITH FALLING LEAVES . . . . . 379

A round table planned and built like the one on page 341. In each of these tables the extremely graceful and restrained curves of the legs are worthy of notice. Even the most ardent advocate of realism in furniture, of an insistence upon the grain of the wood as being its essential strength, will be satisfied with the legs of 341, and if he were to dispute those of 379 as being a little too much carved away and leaving a part of the grain in a feeble exposure, a confrontation of his criticism with the table itself would probably convince him that iron-hard wood and its close, almost homogeneous structure, would make such comment uncalled for.

It cannot be thought, however, that the resulting form was graceful in these strong and convenient tables of the eighteenth century. If one looked at them from a distant part of the room, especially if seated at the time, he would see too much of the machinery and not enough of the design of the piece of furniture. In fact, the design was almost wholly conceived with respect to the closed table standing against the wall. Then it was dignified and seemly enough, and we must imagine these tables as opened out only when the immediate demands of service had to be complied with; and as being then very commonly covered with white cloths. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY BEDSTEAD WITH GILT ORNAMENTS . . . . . 383

This, the fourth high post bedstead given in this Part is the richest of all, not merely because of the gilded appliques on the corners of the tester, the basket of doves in the middle of the front or foot side and the painting which is carried along each side of the same tester, not even these with the addition of the gilded caps which cover the bed screws and show below, but because of the very elaborate and also judicious and well-combined reeding, moulding and carving of the wooden posts themselves. It is noticeable that only the posts of the foot are invested with any decoration at all, those of the head being perfectly plain square tapering shafts. This is one of the handsomest as well as one of the richest four-post bedsteads to be found. The possibility that the painted friezes are not of exactly the same

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epoch as the carved wood must be kept in mind, but does not injure the effect of the piece. In this room there is a most interesting washstand of a date earlier than that of the bedstead; compare pieces shown in Part III. Equally early is the high-back chair seen against the door at the right, while the chair with the lower back and the sculptured panel is of approximately the same date as the bedstead or a little earlier. There is a good mantel clock in the room, a piece when of this merit and of this style, rarer than even the tall clocks built for stairway or kitchen. R. Sturgis.

MAHOGANY CASE OF DRAWERS . . . . . FACING 384

MAHOGANY CARD TABLE . . . . . FACING 384

This is a solid and handsome table. It will be noticed that it has five legs, one of which pulls out to support the flap. This is evidently not a very unusual feature since an identical specimen appears on page 309. E. S.

CHAIR USED BY JOHN ADAMS . . . . . 385

This is said to have been used by John Adams and is, therefore, interesting as showing how long the old fashions survived in some of the New England homes. The model, of course, belongs to the seventeenth century and has already been fully discussed. Mr. Adams was a pronounced enemy to fashion and luxury. E. S.

HARPSICHORD . . . . . FACING 386

Harpsichord or spinet. It is urged elsewhere that great opportunities seemed offered the designer of such pieces, those opportunities being all lost when the much more ponderous piano came in with its generally four-square case and heavy legs. It is still the ideal way of designing a piano to treat its box—that which contains the heavy string-board and which is opened up by the key-board—to treat that by itself and to set it upon a supporting frame of corresponding design indeed, but not lost in the one general conception. It makes a practised designer envious to see what opportunities for making a pretty and delicate piece of furniture were held by the makers of the eighteenth century clavichords. R. Sturgis.

SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS . . . . . FACING 390

A tall-boy of design not unlike that shown in the frontispiece, with the peculiarity that the vertical sides are nearly continuous, as indeed are those of that on page 397. A far more general custom is to have the upper part much narrower and less deep than the table-like lower member and this distribution is seen in the frontispiece. The use of very rich veneer is so unusual in these pieces that one is tempted to believe it an addition of later times, at least in that on page 390, and this might even be held as probable were the drawer fronts only so adorned. The finishing of the lower part around and beyond the door fronts makes the above-mentioned theory less tenable. The straining-piece parted in the middle perhaps to allow of the pushing into the space within of a jar or two—Chinese or Delft covered vases, is also possibly a recent change. The reader will notice in the frontispiece the curious way in which the straining-piece is bowed in the middle, and it is probable that a similar arrangement existed in the one we are now considering. R. Sturgis.

CORNER CHAIR . . . . . 393

This chair is painted white, and has a woven mat bottom. It is a plain piece, of native manufacture. It should be compared with another corner chair on page 364, of very much earlier style. E. S.

SETTEE FROM THE BRATTLE STREET CHURCH,  
BOSTON . . . . . 394

The fret-work in the back is indicative of the Chippendale school, about the middle of the century. The heavy and ungraceful top curved bar, however, is scarcely one of which Chippendale would have approved. E. S.

CHERRY CHEST OF DRAWERS . . . . . 395

In this piece may be seen the development of the old-fashioned chest of drawers which led

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directly to the more recent "bureau." The sensible plan is adopted of putting the bottom drawer high enough above the floor to be accessible without too painful stooping, while the top drawers may be thought to be just as high as the owner's chin, so that she could look into them without effort. The large square raised surface with the radiating and waving flutes may be another drawer or it may be the door to a square compartment with little shelves. Furniture made during the last quarter of the nineteenth century for private persons who gave the order direct to their architect or decorator has also been made on this plan, and indeed there can be no better contrivance, as a piece as high as this takes up no more room on the floor than a bureau of three shallow drawers. The requirement will then exist, however, of a separate dressing table with mirror, but this is itself an advantage, as in this way the mirror may be brought much nearer to the floor. R. Sturgis.

**CORNER CHAIR OWNED BY DANIEL BLISS (1756)  
AND TWO CHAIRS MADE BY JOSEPH HOS-  
MER (CABINET-MAKERS) . . . . . 396**

All three of these are of native manufacture. The three turned legs of the corner chair are unusually quaint in design. This chair is said to have been in existence in 1756. The other two chairs also belong to the Chippendale period, and show designs that frequently occur. E. S.

**MAPLE CHEST-UPON-CHEST OF DRAWERS . . . . . 397**

Tall-boy of very elaborate design and make, a piece which was expensive in its time and to which more thought was given than is usual with pieces of such well-known type—pieces in which tradition counted for almost everything and novelty of design had but a small part to play. R. Sturgis.

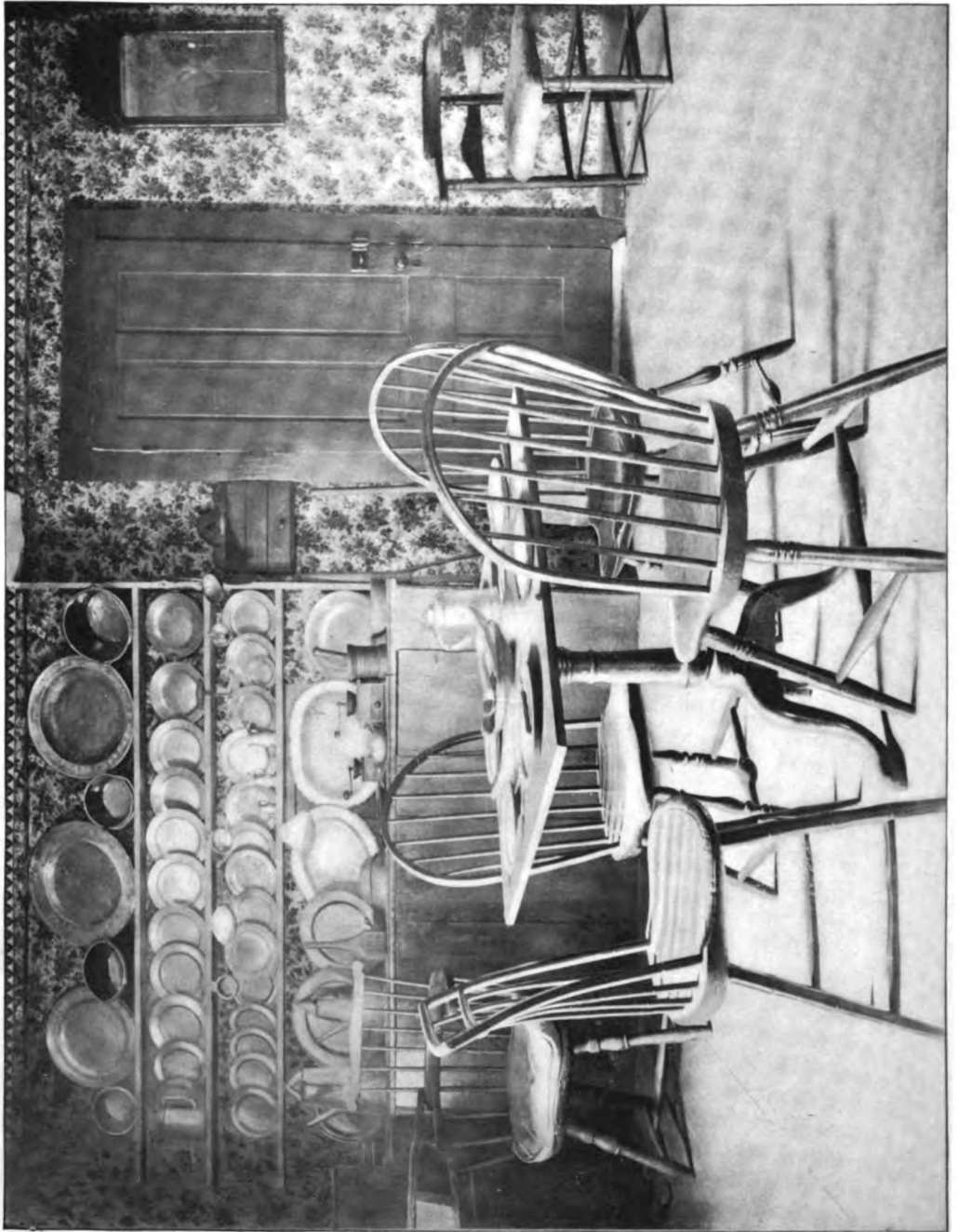


**THE FURNITURE OF  
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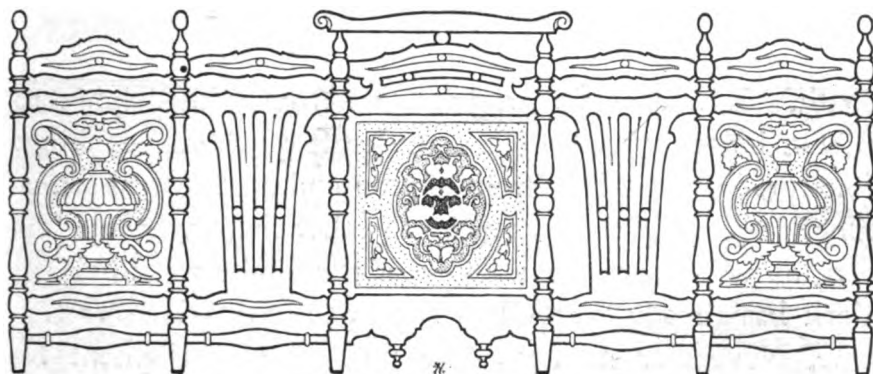
**Part V**







KITCHEN IN THE ROOMS OF THE CONCORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
*Concord, Mass. See page 158.*

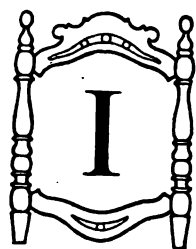


# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

## PART V.

### New England from 1700 to 1776

IMPORTED AND HOME-MADE PIECES OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



It may be confidently asserted that the amount of wooden furniture imported into New England during the eighteenth century formed a very small proportion of what was used there. English wares, including hardware and upholsterers' goods came in on every ship and were duly advertised in the local papers, but on examining the Salem papers prior to the Revolution we scarcely ever come across an announcement of wooden furniture brought in by the latest arrivals. The fact is that New England was not only self-supporting in the province of wooden ware, but was able to export a considerable quantity of that class of goods to other colonies. Her joiners and cabinet-makers were numerous and expert, and consequently New England furniture found a ready sale in the



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South. Edward Drinker, Jr., went from Philadelphia to Boston before 1700 to learn the craft of cabinet-making. Enterprising workmen from Boston and other towns sometimes transferred their energies to other fields where competition was not so keen. One of those who went to New York has already been cited, and in the *South Carolina Gazette*, November 2, 1734, we find an advertisement by another:

“This is to give notice that Charles Warham, Joiner, late from Boston, N. England; maketh all sorts of Tables, Chests, Chest of Drawers, Desks, Book-cases, &c. Also coffins of the newest fashion, never as yet made in Charlestown.”

Some idea of the number of men engaged in this branch of industry in New England may be gained from the records of Salem, which embrace the towns of the seaboard of Massachusetts to the North of Boston. The numerous housewrights are not included in this list; but it must be remembered that they also made a great deal of the common kinds of furniture, such as tables, chairs, forms and cradles. In Lynn, we find John Davis, 1703; Thomas Burrage, 1718; his son, Thomas, 1751; and Timothy Howard, 1764. These were joiners. Jonathan Johnson was a chair-maker there and died in 1741. The joiners of Ipswich mentioned are Thomas Dennis, 1703; his son, Thomas, 1706; John Brown, 1746; and William Caldwell, 1759. Another John Brown, 1758, was a turner there, and Bemsley Wells, a cabinet-maker. Marblehead's joiners were Samuel Goodwin, 1729; Matthew Severett, 1745; Samuel Striker and Michael Bowden, 1762; Joseph Potter, 1768; Francis Cook, 1772; and Job Trask, 1780. Thomas Laskey, 1761, and Benjamin Laskey, 1778, were

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chair-makers. Joiners of Salem were James Symond, 1714; Jos. Allen, 1740; John Lander, 1757; Deacon Miles Ward and Joseph Gavet, 1765; Joseph Symonds, 1769; and Jno. Young, 1773. Lemmon Beadle, a carver, 1717; and Benjamin Gray, a chair-maker, 1761, also lived there. Newbury, or Newburyport, sheltered Francis Halliday, 1767; Jeremiah Pearson and Spindelw Morrison, 1768; Parker Titcomb, 1772; Samuel Long, 1774; and Moses Bayley, 1778. Besides these joiners, there were Daniel Harris, 1752, John Harris, 1767, and Sewall Short, 1773, cabinet-makers; and Oliver Moody, 1775, and his son, Oliver, 1776, chair-makers. Beverley had John Corning, 1734, turner; Joshua Bisson, 1750, and Benjamin Jones, 1776, joiners. Other joiners were Joseph Ames, Haverhill, 1741; Benjamin Thurston, Bradford, 1746; John Tyler, Gloucester, 1767; Ebenezer Osgood, 1768; William Rea, Wenham, 1771; and David Currier, Salisbury, 1778; Jonathan Goodhue, Gloucester, 1770, and Moses Dodge, Manchester, 1776, were cabinet-makers: and Thomas Cross, Bradford, 1772, a chair-maker.

The majority of the above were men of small means whose principal stock in trade consisted of tools, timber and boards; and their own furniture was usually very simple. Samuel Goodwin, £1634; John Corning, £1381; Benjamin Thurston, £1121; Parker Titcomb, £1394; and Job Trask were exceptionally wealthy. By a scrutiny of the cabinet-ware found in the shops, we can gain sure knowledge of what kind of furniture was being made for the average householder at the time the inventory was taken, and this renders this class of inventory more valuable than any other for our purpose. Samuel Goodwin's furniture (1729) shows the strange mixture of styles and materials

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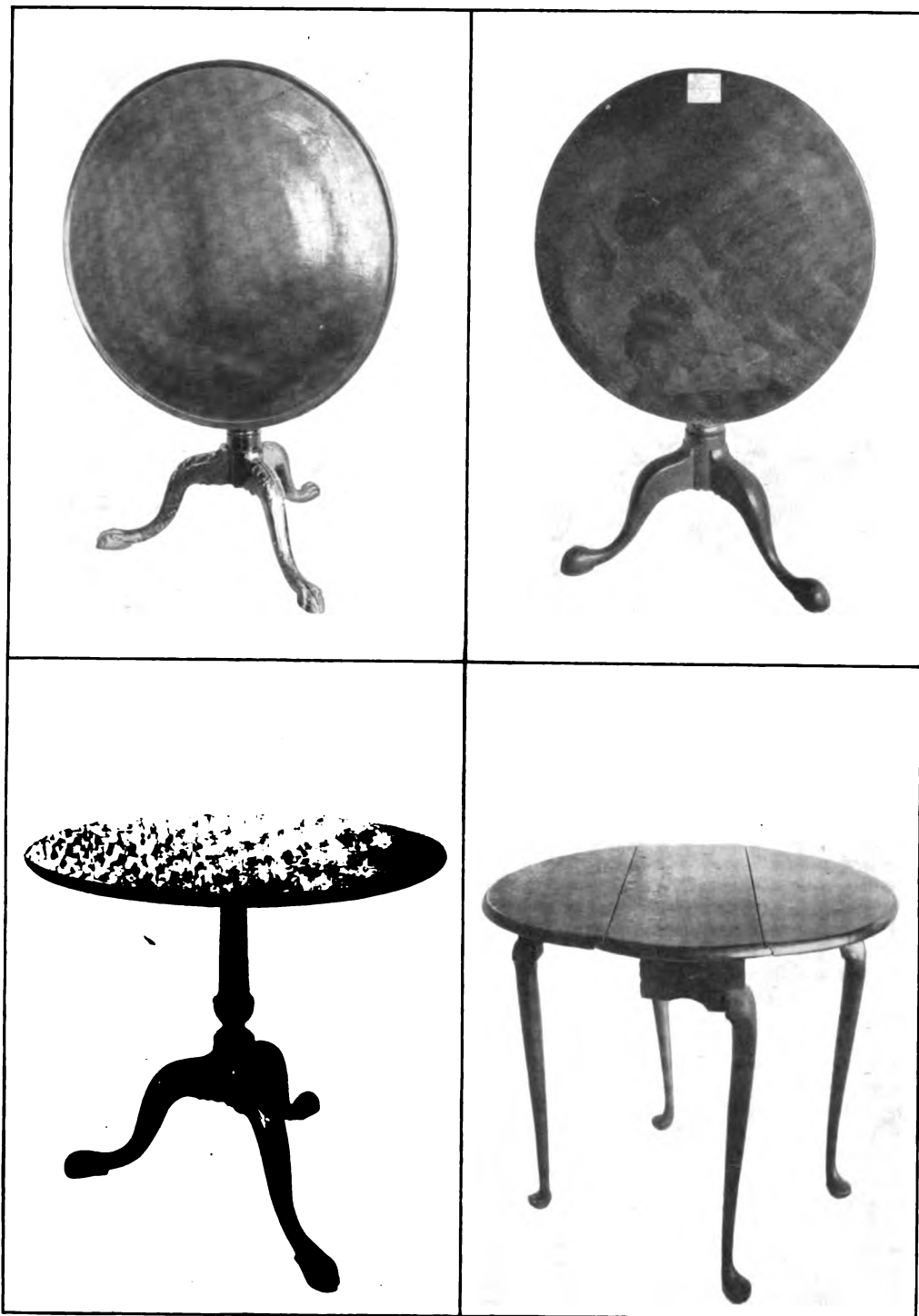


LEATHER CHAIRS AND BELLOWS

Made by the Rev. Theophilus Pickering in 1724; now in the Pickering House, Salem, Mass. See page 320.

characteristic of the transitional period between carved oak and mahogany. His thirty-one chairs were cane, leather, Turkey-work, matted-bottom, and carved-back; and his tables were of maple, black walnut and white-wood. His shop gave no evidence of work.

John Corning was evidently still at business as a turner when he died in 1734. In his shop were eleven two-backed new chairs; nine ditto without bottoms; rungs and



**MAHOGANY TABLE**

*Owned by Silas Deane, now in the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. See page 361.*

**SMALL ROUND TABLE**

*Owned by Nathaniel Silsbee in Salem, now by Mrs. Edward C Pickering, Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. See page 362.*

**MAHOGANY TABLE**

*Owned by Lois Orne about 1770, now in the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass. See page 361.*

**MOLL PITCHER'S TABLE**

*Now in the Essex Institute, Salem. See page 321.*



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backs for chairs; stocks and spokes for spinning-wheels; "other stuff prepared in the shop;" a frame for an oval table; and thirty-six bundles of flags for chairs. The chair frames were probably turned out of poplar, as half a cord of that wood, valued at ten shillings, is all the timber in stock. This furniture was of the cheapest kind, since it totalled only £4-3-0. Matthew Severett (£422; 1745) had in his shop 1181 ft. of pine boards, 604 ft. of maple, 204 ft. of black walnut, and 173 ft. of oak joist. The latter was the cheapest, costing three-sevenths of a penny per foot. The maple was very slightly cheaper than the pine, the prices being three-fifths and two-thirds of a penny per foot respectively. The walnut was by far the most valuable, being worth three-and-one-half pence per foot. In Benjamin Thurston's shop (1746) there was only "maple board and stuff" valued at ten shillings. Daniel Harris (£289; 1752) had a more varied, though still limited, assortment of cabinet-ware than any of the above. His twenty-four chairs, thirty-two shillings, and thirty-four tables, £3-1-4, were common enough; but seven desks, two tables, £20-13-4, evidently belonged to the superior grade of furniture. Board, plank and joist came to £8-1-5. Benjamin Gray (£381; 1761) had a small stock of thirty-eight chairs in his chair-making business: ten of these were "great" chairs, ranging in price from eight to four shillings each. The other chairs cost from two shillings to thirteen pence each. These also must therefore have been of simple construction.

Deacon Miles Ward (£312; 1765) had even cheaper chairs in his house, nine of them being worth only eight pence each. His fellow townsman Joseph Gavet (£299; 1765) owned a maple desk, £1-4-0; a maple case of draw-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ers, £2-8-0; low case of drawers, £1; and high case of drawers, £1-4-0. His shop contained maple, oak, pine, walnut and a little mahogany timber. John Harris (£262; 1767) had some frames for tables and black walnut and maple boards in his shop. Samuel Stryker's goods (£74; 1762) were principally of maple. Three tables of that timber were worth twenty-four, sixteen, and six shillings respectively. His chairs were of a slightly better class than the average joiner's, costing from three shillings to sixteen pence each. He had a desk at £2; another, unfinished, was valued at eight, and an unfinished chair at four shillings. Joseph Symonds (£362; 1769) had a maple desk, £1-10-0, and a maple case of drawers; a cherry-tree desk, £2-10-0; and some black and "joiner's" chairs from four shillings to one shilling each. One 4-ft. table cost sixteen shillings; a 3-ft. ditto, eight shillings; a 3½-ft. maple ditto, twelve shillings; a 3-ft. frame with leaves not hung, seven shillings; a breakfast ditto, two shillings; and a toilette-table, only sixpence. The timber in the shop was maple, black walnut, cherry and mahogany. The walnut was worth eight pence, the cherry, one and two-thirds pence, and the mahogany, eighteen pence per foot. Jonathan Goodhue (£202; 1770) left "sundry joiner's work unfinished, £11-11-9." Francis Cook (£126; 1772) left only six shillings' worth of walnut and pine board.

The leather chairs on page 318 were made in 1724 by the Rev. Theophilus Pickering of Salem. The bellows was also made by him, and bear that date in brass nails with his initials. These pieces are owned by Mr. John Pickering in Salem, Mass. The chair on page 321 is a four-back chair with rush bottom. It is painted green, and is supplied with castors. This belonged to the Lincoln family,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

and is now in the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

The furniture of most of the joiners and cabinet-makers was very scanty, and the prices already given show that the wares they made were intended for the great class of yeomen, artisans, and mariners. A specimen of the cheap joinery work of these men is shown in the lower right-hand corner of the plate facing page 318. It is a roughly put together table with falling leaves, cabriole legs and hoof feet. It belonged originally to Moll Pitcher, the famous fortune-teller of Lynn. She was born in 1738 in Marblehead. Rich and poor consulted her in serious earnest, and few vessels sailed without obtaining her favourable augury. Her method was divination by tea. In 1760, she was married to Robert Pitcher, and died in 1813, being buried in Lynn, where she had lived for many years. The picture to which reference has been made represents the table at which she sat when receiving her clients.

Sewall Short (£796; 1773) was a Newburyport cabi-



OLD GREEN PAINTED AND RUSH-  
BOTTOM CHAIR

Owned by the Lincoln family, now in the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. See page 320.



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net-maker who kept a more ambitious stock both in quantity and quality. His timber comprised 1429 ft. of pine, 1860 maple, 276 black walnut, 115 cedar, 1045 red cedar, 448 Spanish cedar, and 44 mahogany. He made high-priced furniture of the latest styles and most expensive materials. At his death, the mahogany furniture in his workshop was valued at high figures even in its incomplete state. The mahogany pieces specified as unfinished were as follows: desk and bookcase, £15; desk, £6-15-0; bookcase, £4; plain ditto, £3; plain desk, £4; and stand table, fourteen shillings. The other unfinished work consisted of a cedar desk and bookcase, £6-5-0; large cedar desk, £4-5-0; 2 common cedar ditto, £4-5-0; small maple ditto, sixteen shillings; black walnut table, five shillings; and "a quantity of stock partly wrought, £1-4-0." Finished work in stock included two 4-ft. mahogany tables, £4-16-0; two 3½-ft. ditto, £4; mahogany chamber table, £1-4-0; two 4-ft. Spanish cedar tables, £3-10-0; and thirty chairs (kind not specified), £3-13-0. Four mahogany table frames, £3-10-0; and six cabin-stool frames completed the list of warehouse goods.

Mr. Short's desks and bookcases evidently had brass mounts and glass doors, for he had in stock sixty brass handles, £1-5-0; forty-eight ditto, £0-16-0; two sets of desk brasses, £0-8-4; thirty escutcheons, £0-6-3; twenty-four ditto, £0-4-0; and sundry old brasses, bolts and locks, £0-8-0. The panes of glass in the doors were small, being of the sizes commonly used in the windows and hall-lanterns of the day. Mr. Short's stock of glass comprised ninety-three squares 7x9, £1-3-3; and three hundred and seventy-six ditto 5x7, £2-10-1.

Glass was sold in standard sizes in New England as well



**GILT MIRROR AND MAHOGANY DRESSING TABLE**

*Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn. See page 343.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

as New York. Abner Chase advertises in the *Essex Gazette*, May 28, 1771: "Bristol crown window glass, 7x5, 6x8, 7x9, 8x10, 9x11, 9x12." Joiners were often glaziers also: Thomas Waldron of Marblehead (£43; 1740) has "window frames, chairs and 30 squares of glass, £12-2-0," among his joiner's ware.

The only timber found in the shop of Oliver Moody, Jr. (£168; 1776), was 82 ft. of poplar and 52 ft. of ash, all valued at seventeen shillings. He manufactured chairs. Moses Dodge (£132; 1776) owned 675 ft. of maple at two pence, and 176 ft. of black walnut at three pence per foot. Benjamin Jones (£303; 1776) was a joiner who made miscellaneous cabinet-ware. His goods included a desk, £2-8-0; ditto, £2-4-0; chest with drawers, £0-13-4; case of drawers, £2-13-4; seven tables, £2-2-0; stand-table, half finished, £0-6-8; table frame, £0-10-0; brackets for desk, £0-2-0; legs for candlestand, £0-1-6; lists (frames) and backs for chairs, £0-16-0; thirteen chairs, £1-1-0; great chair and six small ditto, £5-3-9; two great round and six joiner's ditto, £2-8-0; and a rough table-leaf, sixteen pence. Mr. Jones thus made chairs for all classes,—even the most fashionable. His timber consisted of 207 ft. walnut, 208 ft. maple, 40 ft. cherry, and one thousand clapboards.

It will be seen from the above analysis of the wares produced by local workmen in the region of which Salem and Marblehead formed the head-centre, that the needs of the community must have been very simple, unless the native productions were supplemented by importations. This conclusion is fully supported by an examination of the inventories as a whole, which show very small estates during the first half century. Indeed, the first considerable estates

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

found are those of James Calley (1734), and Captain Joseph Smethurst (1746), both of Marblehead. Of the former's estate of £2,311-16-18½, only £74 represented household furniture, and of this a desk worth £5, a looking-glass, £5, and a clock £7, were the only noticeable pieces. Of Captain Smethurst's total of £2,685-11-7, a schooner accounts for £300, and real estate for £1,000 more. He owned silver plate valued at £107-19-2; but with the exception of a Japanned tea-table (£5-10-0) all his wooden furniture was such as was made by the native joiners. When the woods are specified during this period, which is comparatively seldom, they prove to be those found in the joiners' shops; viz.: pine, maple, etc. The absence of cabinet-makers' advertisements from the Salem papers is noticeable. A rapid survey of their columns has not yielded a single example, although notices of the arrival of English goods are not uncommon.

The same conditions existed in Boston. Sometimes we find a cabinet-maker removing to Salem from Boston, which was regarded as one of the headquarters of good work. We have seen Boston wares quoted in New York. An advertisement, in 1771, informs the public that Joseph P. Goodwin from Charlestown has set up business in Salem. "He makes best mahogany chairs, couches and easy chairs, sofas and anything in the chairmaking business. . . . N. B. He has got two sorts of chairs made by him which are called as neat as any that are made in Boston." The last sentence implies that the chair-makers of the day by no means confined themselves slavishly to recognized styles and patterns, but sought to introduce variations of their own design. Even clocks and watches were made here in considerable quantities, and some of the native makers were in

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

very good repute. The *Salem Gazette* of December 23, 1774, announces that "James Furnivall, clock and watch-maker (late journeyman to Richard Cranch of Boston), has opened a shop at Marblehead."

An Ipswich clockmaker at this date was Richard Manning; a simple clock of his, made in 1767, faces page 360. It is owned by the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.

One of the most interesting old houses in Salem has been made famous by Hawthorne in *The House of the Seven Gables*. Four generations of Turners—wealthy merchants of Salem—lived in it. The first, Captain John Turner, removed here soon after 1662. In his day, the house consisted of two large lower rooms, two chambers above, and rooms in the attic. Captain Turner's troop served against the Indians and in the Canadian Expedition. His son, John, was of great importance in Salem. He commanded the town regiment and was one of his Majesty's Council. He died in 1743, worth £10,752-17-8½. His home was elaborately furnished. The "best room" contained four tables: one, of black walnut, was large and expensive; another was japanned; the third, a small walnut; and the fourth, an inlaid tea-table and stand. Upon the latter stood a set of blue-and-white china. There were twelve black cane chairs, half a dozen white cane chairs, and a great white cane chair in the room. A looking-glass with two brass arms, valued at £30, and two glass sconces hung on the walls, as well as nineteen mezzotints covered with glass. A bright fire blazed upon the usual brass hearth furniture; and the great amount of china and glass, including punch-bowls, flowered decanters, plates, dishes, tea-pots, etc., indicates that the "best room" was a breakfast and dining, as well as a living room.

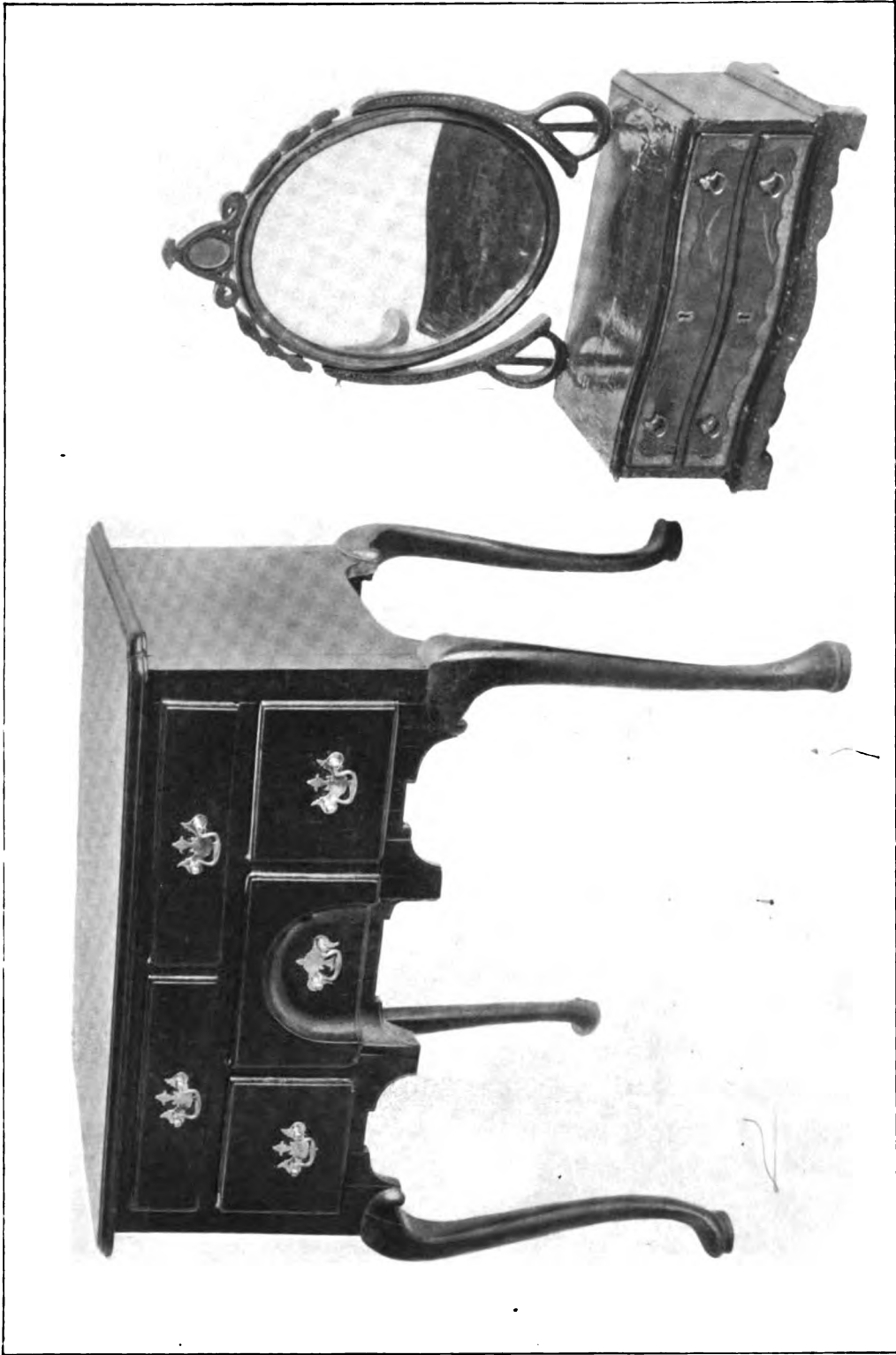
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The "Great Chamber" was equally well furnished. Its most valuable piece of furniture was the bed with its head-cloth, tester, double set of curtains of camblet and "flow'd muzling," its silk quilt and blankets. The window curtains matched the bed curtains, as was the custom of the day. The next important articles were a "case of drawers and mounts" and a cabinet, worth respectively £31-10-0 and £25. There were no less than eighteen chairs here. There was, of course, an open fire upon brass andirons, and on the walls were twenty pictures in lacquered frames, and a looking-glass with two brass arms. There was a considerable amount of china in this "great chamber," including a "sullabub pott," and three china images used as ornaments. Some of it stood upon a painted table and a stand. Nearly every article used in table service is found here.

The Hall contains a clock worth £14; and a long, a black walnut oval, and two small tables. There are two old chairs, and twelve leather chairs, a looking-glass, three maps, and a brass dial; and iron dogs instead of the customary brass.

Passing into the hall chamber, we find a bed hung with calico curtains, head-cloth and tester, and made comfortable with a blanket, a green rug, a blue rug, and a large and small calico quilt. The windows are draped, seven pictures brighten the walls, and we note a "case of draws," a cypress chest, a square table, a stand, four black chairs, one old chair, and some china, among which is a large coffee-cup.

The "shop chamber" contains a bed with curtains, head-cloth and valance, two old chairs and three small pictures. Six pictures adorn the stairway; and a map of Virginia and Maryland, and one of Boston, the entry way.



DRESSING TABLE WITH DRAWERS, AND JAPANNE DRESSING-GLASS

*Now in the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass. See pages 343 and 368.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The "Porch Chamber" was furnished with a bed and bedstead having a tester, head-cloth, curtains and valance and four rugs, worth altogether £25; and an old chest of drawers.

The "Kitchen Chamber" had a more expensive bed



MAHOGANY FIELD-BED

In the Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H. See page 334.

and bedstead, adorned with blue curtains and furnished with two blankets and two quilts. A looking-glass, an old oak table, an old case of drawers, and five Turkey-work and five callimanco chairs complete the furniture of this room. The windows were made cheerful by six curtains of calico. Four pictures hung on the walls. There was the usual brass hearth furniture, and in this room were kept great

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

stores of holland, garlix, "oznabriggs" and other materials for sheeting and counterpanes, besides table linen amounting to no less than £390. The "Great Chamber Garrott" was also a store room. Here we find two old bedsteads, an old chest, fifteen old rugs, and a feather bed weighing fifty pounds. The "Accounting Room," on the first floor, contained an old slate table, three trunks and a chest. We cannot fail to notice the arms and ammunition here, including pistols and bullets; nor the silver scales and weights worth £5, a silver-hilted sword-belt and dagger valued at £8, velvet holsters, a buff belt and three straps and belt, and a case with fifteen bottles.

In Captain Francis Goelet's *Journal* (1746-1750) we get a glimpse of the best house of this district.

"Oct. 20th. Lodg'd at Mr. Brownes after Breakfast Sauntered round the Towne mayking Our Observations on the Build<sup>s</sup>, etc. Dynd at his House after Dinner had a Good Deal Conversation with him upon Various subjects, he being a Gent<sup>n</sup> of Excellent Parts well Adversed in Leaturate, a Good Scholar, a Vertuosa and Lover of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, having an Extraordinary Library of Books of the Best Ancient and Modern Authors, about 3 a Clock we Sett out in his Coach for his Country Seat rideing trough a Pleasant Country and fine Rhoads we arrived there at 4 a clock the Situation is very Airy Being upon a Heigh Hill which Over Looks the Country all Round and affords a Pleasant Rural Prospect of a Fine Country with fine woods and Lawns with Brooks water running trough them. You have also a Prospect of the Sea on one Part and On another A Mountain 80 Miles distant. The House is Built in the Form of a Long Square, with Wings at Each End, and is about 80 Foot Long, in

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the middle is a Grand Hall Surrounded above by a fine Gallery with Neat turned Bannester and the Ceiling of the Hall representing a Large room Designed for an Assembly or Ball Room, the Gallery for the Musicians, etc. The Building has four doors Fronting the N. E. S. and W. Standing in the Middle the Great Hall you have a Full View of the Country from the Four Doors at the Ends of the Buildings in 2 upper and 2 Lower Rooms with Neat Stair Cases Leadeing to them in One the Lower Rooms is his Library and Studdy well Stockd with a Noble Collection of Books.”

We have seen that none of the Salem or Marblehead joiners and cabinet-makers, whom we have found recorded before 1773, kept in stock the most expensive kinds of furniture, whether imported or home-made; we have also seen that the newspapers do not mention it. The question therefore naturally arises: Where did the Turners, Brownes and other prosperous merchants procure their fine furniture? The answer is that some of it was made to order, and the rest was specially imported, sometimes in their own ships, just as was the case in Boston.

It was quite the custom for persons of affluence to have their furniture made to order, and sometimes they imported their own woods, as in the case of Christopher Champlin, a young merchant of Newport, R. I., who brought with him from the West Indies, in 1762, several logs of mahogany and had a number of pieces of furniture constructed. Among these was a bureau which was used for many years by his daughter, Miss Peggy Champlin, quite a famous belle, and by his son, Christopher Grant Champlin, who purchased the Champlin House in Newport (previously known as the Cheeseborough House) in 1782. The bureau

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

finally descended to Mr. George Champlin Mason, of Newport.

The correspondence of merchants with their foreign agents from the earliest times contains many orders for purchases of household goods. Sufficient has survived to show the extent of this practice. A few specific instances may be offered in evidence.

In a letter to Samuel Storke, dated "Boston, N. E., Feb. 20, 17<sup>19</sup>/<sub>20</sub>," we find Judge Sewall enclosing the following "Memoranda":

"To be Bought.

"Curtains and Vallens for a Bed, with Counterpane, Head-Cloth and Tester of good yellow waterd worsted camlet\* with Triming well made; and Bases, if it be the fashion.

"A good fine large Chintz Quilt well made. A True Looking-Glass of black Walnut Frame of the newest Fashion (if the Fashion be good), as good as can be bought for five or six pounds.

"A second Looking-Glass as good as can be bought for four or Five pounds, same kind of frame.

"A Duzen of good black Walnut chairs, fine Cane, with a Couch. A Duzen of Cane Chairs of a different figure, and great Chair, for a Chamber; all black Walnut."

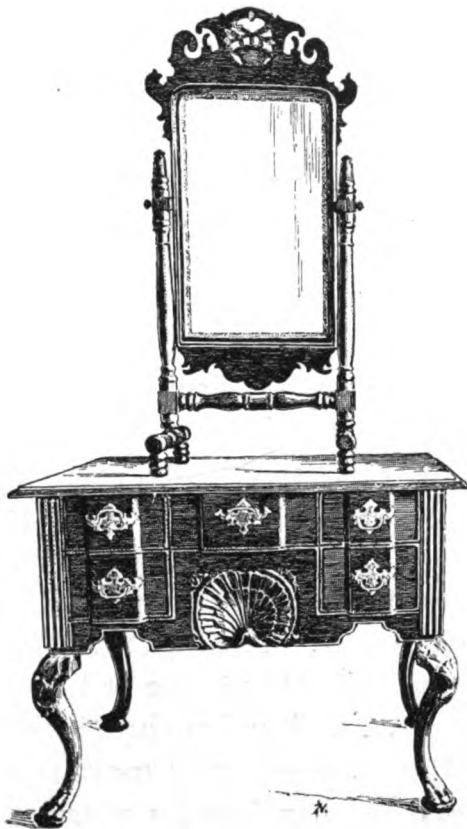
His list also includes a bell-metal skillet, a warming-pan, four pairs of brass-headed iron dogs, a brass hearth for a chamber with dog's tongs, shovel and fender of the newest fashion (the fire to lie on the iron), a brass mortar, four pairs of brass candlesticks, four brass snuffers with stands, six small brass chafing dishes, two brass basting ladles, a pair

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\* "Send also of the same Camlet and Triming, as may be enough to make Cushions for the Chamber Chairs."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

of bellows with brass noses, a small hair broom, a dozen large pewter plates, newest fashion, a dozen pewter porringers, a dozen small glass salt-cellars, and a dozen good ivory-hafted



MAHOGANY LOW CASE OF DRAWERS AND MAHOGANY LOOKING-GLASS

Owned by Miss Sherburne, Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H. See page 367.

knives and forks. These articles are intended for his daughter Judith. He sends £50 and adds, "If there be any money over, send a piece of fine Cambrick and a Ream of good Writing Paper."

Another instance is the following order in a letter from

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

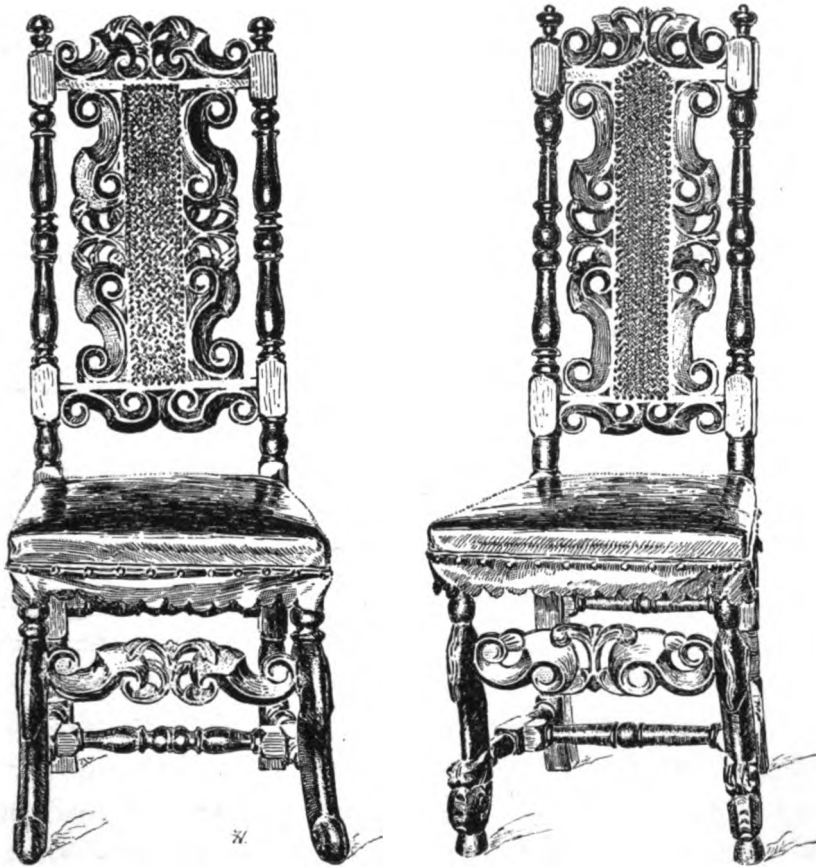
Sir William Pepperell to Silas Hooper in England. It is dated December 6, 1737. He writes:

“I Desire you will buy and send me by y<sup>e</sup> first good Opportunity, for this port or Boston, twenty peaces ossenbrigs; eight dosn. of halfe hower glasses; foure dos<sup>n</sup> of halfe minit glasses; three peaces of bedtickle of about fiveteen pence p<sup>r</sup> yard;—ten peaces of Lubeck Duck; six dozen of such castor hats you sent last . . . six dos<sup>n</sup> of Cheep Closet Locks, six dos<sup>n</sup> of such Chist Locks you sent last, a grose of pad Locks; about Cw<sup>t</sup> of put<sup>r</sup> dishes, a grose of put<sup>r</sup> plates, fifty w<sup>t</sup> of put<sup>r</sup> basons; . . . a dos<sup>n</sup> of handsome Chairs of y<sup>e</sup> New fashion for a Chamber and a handsome looking glass for y<sup>e</sup> same, and Curtains, etc., for a bed of y<sup>e</sup> same, and Case of draws. Send me brass and Locks and henges for six Scritors and Ditto for y<sup>e</sup> same for Case of Draws; six dos<sup>n</sup> p<sup>r</sup> of butts for henges of tables . . . a Dos<sup>n</sup> of Choice Chist locks that cannot be pickt; . . . foure dos<sup>n</sup> p<sup>r</sup> of Snipe bells to hang small Chists; . . . send two marble Stons to make two haths one of six feet Long and fifteen Inches wide; . . . The hight of y<sup>e</sup> Chamber, where y<sup>e</sup> bed is to be put, between y<sup>e</sup> flore and y<sup>e</sup> plasturing, is 8 feet and 4 Inches . . . You have here inclosed, a draught of a chamber, I desire you to geet mock tapestury or pant<sup>d</sup> canvis lay<sup>d</sup> in oyle for hangings for y<sup>e</sup> same, and send me . . . My wife would Chuse that y<sup>e</sup> Curtains for y<sup>e</sup> bed sent for in this foregoing Letter Should be of a Crimson Couler, if Fashionable.” (Other instances of individual importations are given on pages 374–76 and 380–82.)

Two of Sir William's chairs are shown on page 333. They are now in the Ladd House, Portsmouth, N. H. These were of carved oak frames filled in with cane and cane seats, as the back still indicates. This style of chair

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

has frequently appeared in our former pages. It belongs to the seventeenth century, but like other styles it overlapped. Sir William Pepperell was one of the most distinguished



CARVED OAK CHAIRS

Originally owned by Sir William Pepperell ; now in the Ladd House, Portsmouth, N. H. See page 332.

New Englanders. He was born in Kittery, Me., in 1696, and died there in 1759. He was the only native of New England created a baronet. His title was the reward for his service at the siege and capture of Louisburg in 1745.



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

His house was richly furnished, his table was resplendent with massive plate, costly mirrors and paintings adorned his walls, his cellar was filled with choice wines, and his park stocked with deer.

When his daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Nathaniel Sparhawk, her father built a handsome residence for her and furnished it in the richest style. In accordance with the English fashion, a certain colour predominated in each chamber. The bed and window curtains were of red, blue, yellow and other coloured damask and each room was designated the Red, the Blue, the Yellow, or the Green Room. To this bright use of colour in colonial days we have frequently drawn attention.

The interesting bed shown on page 327 is a mahogany field bed which so frequently appears in the homes of the period. It is owned by Miss Sherburne and is in the Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H.

Connecticut preserves the seventeenth-century flavour in her houses until many years after the new century has come in. Leather, sealskin, wooden and serge chairs are the only kinds found in the house of Col. Robert Treat (1710). Eleven years later, Col. Joseph Treat (£2,026) has only leather chairs; and a brass clock, £5-10-0, is his most expensive piece of furniture. An example of this clock has been given (see facing page 168). John Hodson (£947; 1711) has a bed in every room except the hall; the principal furniture of the latter being two square tables and eleven high- and twelve low-backed leather chairs. The old "cupboard" still lingers. John Mix, of New Haven (1712), has a "cuberd with ye cloth, and earthen things on the cuberds head." Robert Treat, Jr. (£3,383; 1721), owns a "cupboard in ye parlour, glass

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

case, great chest in ye parlour," great chair carved, and old carved cupboard.

However, the old carved furniture was no longer being made; the chairs especially were undergoing a great change. Some of those mentioned about 1710 are cane, black, white and varnished. The change from the seventeenth century appears plainly in the inventory of John Mix, Jr. (£1,254; 1722), who possessed "six crooked-backed chairs, two great ditto, six straight-backed ditto, six five-slat ditto, three red ditto, and eight plain ditto." The straight-backed chairs had turned posts and front legs; and horizontal flat bars in the back made them two-, three-, four-, or five-slat chairs. Samuel Clark of Milford (£6,666; 1725) had leather, black, red and white chairs. The red chair was made of white-wood and painted. We also find red calfskin and red Russia-leather chairs mentioned. Black chairs were very general now; and the Turkey-work chair was as popular as ever. Mary Prout (1724) owned six new Turkey-work chairs, six older ditto, and three lower ditto. She also owned twenty-three others, including two great chairs. There was thus considerable variety in height. The old square timber chairs survived in many houses, and chairs with cane in the back lasted far into the century.

The great mass of furniture in Connecticut was entirely of native manufacture. Oak was largely neglected, the favourite woods being cedar, white-wood, cherry and black walnut. In 1726, a rich cabinet-maker of New Haven has cedar, cherry and white-wood boards only in his shop. The chests, cases, and desks of drawers that were made in such large numbers now often had brass mounts. The applied black ornaments and knobs were

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

falling into disuse, and were labeled "old-fashioned" in the inventories. In 1726, drops and escutcheons are valued at fourpence each. Mahogany made slow progress in public favour in Connecticut. With the exception of a stray piece here and there, it shows no sign till well on towards the middle of the century. Job Smith of New Haven (£8,907; 1743), did not possess a single piece of mahogany. His most expensive articles were two escritaires at £9 each, a black walnut case of drawers at £7, and an eight-day clock at £30. His chairs were leather, wooden, black, and covered with shalloon. By this time, tables such as those facing page 64 and on page 97 were no longer made. Mr. Smith had an "old-fashion" one that was valued at four shillings only, whereas his three oval tables came to £7-5-0. His fellow townsmen, Lieutenant Stephen Trowbridge (£3,010; 1744), Michael Todd (£7,028; 1745), Elihu Yale (£8,189; 1748), and Theophilus Munson (£6,868; 1749), also lacked any mahogany among their household goods. At that date, men of their position and relative wealth in other colonies would have been behind the times without at least mahogany chairs and tables. Lieutenant Trowbridge's chairs were great, old slat, plain, slat-bannister, crown-back, three-slat and four-slat. The woods are not mentioned. The only other pieces of cabinet-ware of any importance are a case of drawers, £15, and a case of drawers of cherry-tree on frame £12-10-0. Michael Todd had a case of drawers with steps, £6, and a button-wood oval table, £2-15-0; but nothing else of note. Elihu Yale's chairs were old black, black slat-back, and white. He had seven tables, including a "vernish table" (lacquered) and an old table with oak leaf. He owned a valuable chest of drawers and several old-fashioned

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

chests, one with a drawer, drop and escutcheon. The description of the latter answers to that shown on page 271.

Cherry was used extensively in the construction of tables, chairs and chests and cases of drawers. Kalm has



CROWN-BACK CHAIR

Owned by the Whipple family, now by the Misses Burnett, *Elmwood*, Cambridge, Mass. See page 338.

explained the virtues and popularity of this wood (see page 285). A low case of drawers and a chest of drawers of Connecticut make appear on pages 339 and 395. They are of dark cherry and are both ornamented with the sunflower. Both pieces are owned by Thompson S. Grant, Esq., Enfield, Conn.

In the middle of the century, the prevailing styles of

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

chair still include black, white and cane-back, as well as leather and Turkey-work bottoms. A good deal of cherry appears side by side with white-wood. Warham Mather (£2,511; 1745) had several pieces of cherry, one of which was a large table—no mahogany is mentioned. Theophilus Manson (£6,868; 1749) has two-slat, three-slat, four-slat and crown-back chairs. He also owns a case of drawers on a frame with feet, £20, and a desk, £12; but again no mahogany.

In the same year, we find black chairs with straight backs, flat-backed ditto, and black crook-back ditto. We also gather that white-wood board costs threepence per foot. The Rev. Samuel Whittelsey (£21,641-14-10; 1752) has walnut, cherry and white-wood furniture, but no mahogany. Among other things, he has six cherry-tree chairs, £9; a black walnut chest of drawers and table, £54; a desk, £23; a white-wood coloured table, £2-15-0, and a coloured square table, £1-10-0.

The two-, three-, four-, and five-slat chairs were the same that were called two-back, four-back, etc., in the Boston inventories. The crown-back chairs belonging to Lieutenant Trowbridge and Theophilus Manson had lately come into fashion here. The shape of the back, which somewhat closely follows the outline of a crown, gave this chair its name. In common with so many other designs of carved walnut and mahogany frames of that period, this is often attributed to Chippendale. One variety of the crown-back chair appears on page 123, and another on page 337.

The latter is an early and plain form, and shows the crown in part of the splat as well as the top of the back. This is one of two chairs originally owned by the Whip-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ple family. They belong to the Misses Burnett, granddaughters of Mr. James Russell Lowell, at *Elmwood*, Cambridge, Mass.

Although no mahogany is mentioned, the household



LOW CASE OF DRAWERS, OR DRESSING-TABLE (DARK CHERRY)

Owned by Thompson S. Grant, Esq., Enfield, Conn. See page 337.

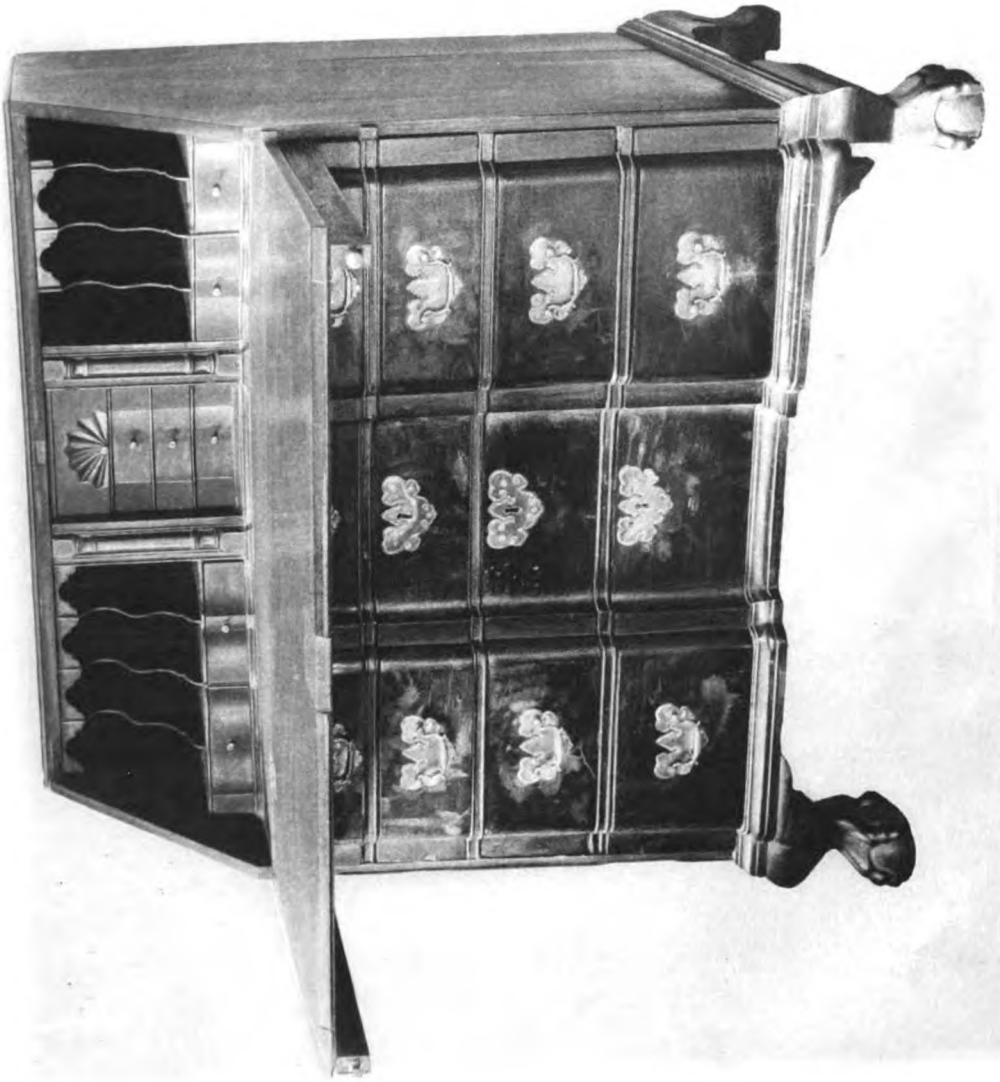
goods of Joseph Bryan, of Milford (£1,062; 1752), show some pretensions to elegance. Of his thirty-six chairs, six had worked bottoms, six were of Turkey-work, three white and two dozen black. An oval table, £10; a tea-table, £4; a large waxwork (lacquer) case, £20; and a case of drawers and a dressing-table, £33, are the most noticeable pieces. The very expensive case of drawers was

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

probably made by a native cabinet-maker ; and some of the cost was due to brass mounts, the value of which we can gather from the contemporary inventory of John Miles (£4,804; 1755). He owned one set of brass for a chest of drawers, £3, and another for a desk, £10. He seems to have worked, like so many of his brethren, almost exclusively in cherry and white-wood. His shop contained 202 ft. of the latter at sixpence per foot, and 384 ft. of cherry at 17½ pence per foot.

On page 341 are shown two mahogany pieces owned by Miss Marion P. Whitney, New Haven, Conn. The chair was originally the property of Governor William Pitkin (1694-1769), governor of Connecticut in 1766-69. The model shows a curious combination of Anglo-Dutch legs and frame-work with the Gothic tracery in the splat that came into fashion in England towards the middle of the century. The table is square with falling leaves supported by legs that may be pulled in or out. These are slightly cabriole and end in hoof feet. An oval table of the same period appears on page 379.

The Providence inventories tell the same story as those of New Haven. There was plenty of comfort, and the houses were thoroughly well furnished, but the cabinet-ware was of native make, except in rare instances. Among the many estates of more than one thousand pounds, we have the following: Major W. Crawford, £3,551, 1720; Benjamin Tillinghast, £4,776, 1726; Job Harris, £1,615, 1729; Captain Nicholas Power, £1,751, 1734; Captain William Walker, £2,498, 1742; Arnold Coddington, £3,640, 1742; Stephen Arnold, £2,127, 1743; Peter Thatcher, £1,121, 1745; Captain William Tillinghast, £4,290, 1753; Captain Ebenezer Hill, £3,314; David Rutting-

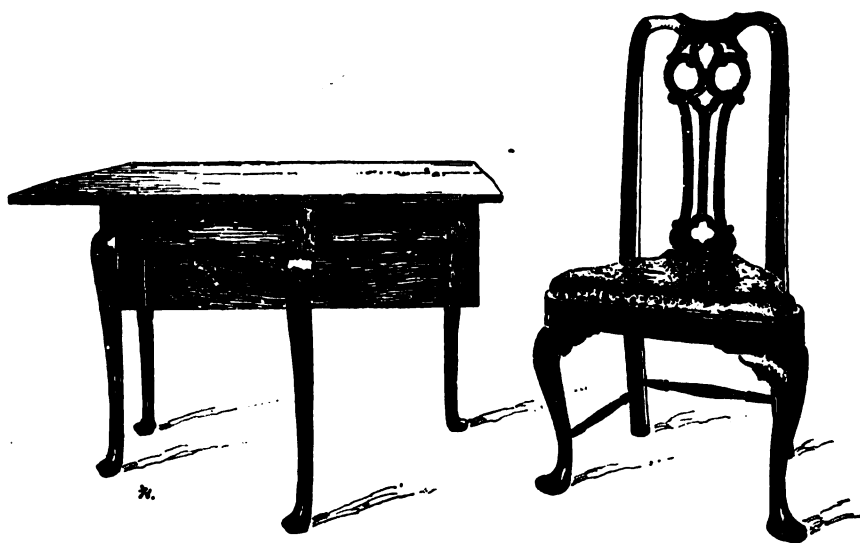


Mahogany desk - similar to one facing p. 376 -  
one of the best designed pieces of the middle  
of the eighteenth century.



THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY.  
ASTOR, LENOX & TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



MAHOGANY TABLE AND CHAIR

The latter originally belonged to Governor William Pitkin. Now owned by Miss Marion P. Whitney, New Haven, Conn. See page 340.

borg, £1,425; John Mawney, £9,050; Rev. John Checkley, £2,530, and George Dunbar, £2,261, all 1754; Oliver Arnold, £1,021, 1771. In none of these inventories is a single piece of mahogany recorded, with the exception of John Mawney, who possessed a solitary desk of that wood valued at £40. When the woods are mentioned, which, relatively, is very seldom, we find the same as in Connecticut: pine, walnut, white-wood, maple and cherry. Peter Thatcher and David Ruttingborg both made furniture; the former had maple boards in his shop, and the latter had pine. The old "cupboard" gives place at an early date to the case of drawers. The latter and the escritoire formed the most decorative pieces of furniture in the rooms, and often attained high values. Arnold Coddington's desk was worth £20. It was mounted with brass, as was all the new furniture of that kind. Mr. Coddington had a lot of brass

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

for sale for the use of native cabinet-makers. It comprised three dozen Dutch rings and escutcheons at three shillings a dozen; three gross of extra desk brass handles at eighteen shillings a dozen, with ten dozen escutcheons to match, at fourteen shillings a dozen; a gross of brass handles at fifteen shillings a dozen, with seven dozen escutcheons to match at eleven shillings a dozen; ten dozen brass handles at twelve shillings a dozen, with six and a half dozen escutcheons at eight shillings a dozen; some odd brass handles; and a fine-ward desk-lock valued at one guinea.

The case of drawers was low and high. To-day the two varieties are popularly known as "low-boy" and "high-boy," but I have never come across these terms in any inventory of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. In the Providence inventories, the distinction between chest of, or with drawers, and the case of drawers is clearly maintained. For example, John Mawney (1754) owns a maple low case of drawers at twelve and a chest with drawers at eight pounds. Benjamin Tillinghast also has a chest with drawers at three, and a case of drawers with glasses upon it at seven pounds. The top of the case of drawers was therefore adorned with china and glass as the head of the cupboard, which it superseded, had been. The case of drawers first appeared probably about 1690, and made rapid strides into popularity. It is found in the majority of comfortable homes in the early years of the eighteenth century, and the native workmen soon construct it of black walnut, cherry, white-wood, maple and even pine. When made of white-wood, or pine, it was usually coloured: the favourite tint was Indian red, but sometimes these woods were stained, grained and dappled to imitate maple and other woods. Some of these cases of drawers, although presenting a good

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

outward appearance, are of somewhat flimsy workmanship, and show signs of cheap construction. The drawers sometimes are ill-fitting. A very fine example of the high case of drawers, belonging to Mr. George Dudley Seymour, of New Haven, is shown on the frontispiece. This is made of white-wood and was originally stained Venetian red. It is now coloured a deep brown, and is adorned with brass drop-handles.



LOW CASE OF DRAWERS

Originally owned by Governor Dudley, now by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord. See page 368.

Another six-legged high case of drawers appears facing page 390. It is preserved in the Whipple House, Ipswich, Mass.

A low case of drawers, or dressing table with drawers, of cheap wood painted black, such as was made by the native joiners, faces page 326. It is owned by the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass. Another, owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, is represented on page 367 and one, owned by Mrs. Wainwright, of Hartford, faces page 322.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

When mahogany came into general use, it was used in the construction of the case of drawers, side by side with the other woods. By that date, the legs had become slender, and had been reduced to four in number. The low case of drawers probably never had more than four legs, although six-legged so-called "low-boys" are occasionally shown; but these are really only the lower part of the high case of drawers which rested upon it, and which has been lost. The low case had two or more rows of drawers; the lower part of the high case generally had one only. The illustrations will make this clear. If the upper parts of the high cases of drawers facing pages 313 and 390 were removed, there would be a sense of incompleteness in the lower parts that is not felt with the low cases given on pages 339 and 343, and especially on page 331. On page 345 appears the lower part of a six-legged case of drawers owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn.

Before leaving Providence, we should note the heterogeneous collection of cabinet-ware found in the houses as we approach the Revolution. Oliver Arnold (1771) will serve as an instance. Of mahogany he owned a high case of drawers, two square tea-tables, a china table, and a 4½-ft. square-leaved table; of black walnut, a desk and book-case and a 4-foot table; of cherry, a china table; of maple, a 5-foot table, a square and an oval tea-table; a 4-foot, a 4-foot round, and an oval table, and six framed chairs; and of pine, a long table. Other furniture, the wood of which is not specified, includes an old high case of drawers, an older ditto, two small tables and a candlestand, a small stand-table, six framed green, two high-backed and two low Windsor, six framed-seat banistered, six banistered, six four-back, two round, and a great chair.



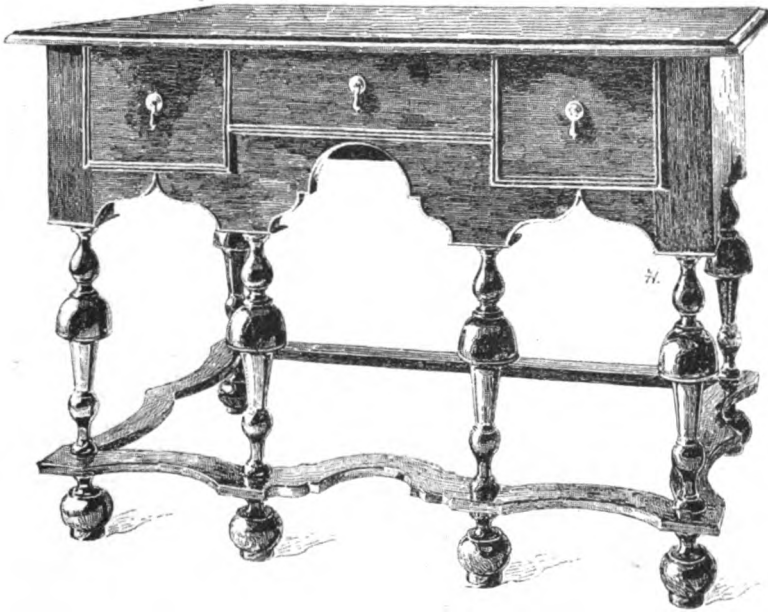
**LEATHER TRAVELLING TRUNK**

*Said to have belonged to Queen Anne. Owned by Mrs. Charles Wyllys Elliott, Cambridge, Mass. See page 330.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

In our survey of this period before the Revolution, if we examine the full contents of a typical home every ten years or so, we shall be able to form a clear idea of the successive changes and developments of household furniture. The possessions of Governor Phipps (see page 230) are



PART OF A SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS  
Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn. See page 344.

representative of the best that was in use during the first decade of the eighteenth century. His chests of drawers with tables-and-stands and dressing-boxes were of the new style we have just been considering. In his house also, we still find the closet which was a sort of alcove, or small annex to a larger chamber. We constantly come across this in the better class of house all through this period. Robert Bronsden (£3,252; 1702) had a closet to his



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

dining-room that contained a table, his pistols and some books. In the closet of the Chamber over Hall, there were three Turkey-work chairs, a table with a calico carpet, a picture and a sword. In the closet to the Chamber over Dining Room, there was a bedstead with curtains and valance, besides a black frame looking-glass; while the room itself contained only a square table, six Turkey-work chairs, some things on the mantel-tree, and brass hearth-ware.

A view of a comfortable Boston home of 1707 is gained from that of Katharine Eyre, widow of John Eyre, who is about to be married to Wait Winthrop. Her hall is furnished with two oval tables, a dozen cane chairs and a great chair, a couch and quilt, a looking-glass, a clock worth £12, and brass andirons, shovel and tongs. In the hall chamber, which is the most expensively furnished room in the house, there is a handsome bedstead hung with china curtains trimmed with India silk. A quilt of the same lies upon the feather bed, as well as a pair of fine large blankets. She owns an olive wood cabinet valued at £5. Six Turkey-work chairs, a cane couch, a table and a looking-glass complete the furniture of this attractive apartment, rendered still more so by a number of books worth £15. The fire-place is adorned with brass; the light is derived from candles in brass candlesticks. The "kitchen chamber" is furnished with a feather bed and bedstead, hung with "searge curtains and vallens." A chest with drawers, worth £7, stands in this room, and there are seven cane chairs and couch, a looking-glass, andirons, tongs and shovel. Six Turkey-work chairs form the seats in the Little Chamber, where the large bedstead is also hung with "searge curtains and vallens." Green curtains are in "ye chamber over the kitchen chamber" and cur-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

tains of that colour decorate the bedstead. In "ye little room" there were nine cane chairs, two little tables, a looking-glass, and andirons, tongs, etc. A feather bed seems to have been the only furniture of the "second chamber over ye little room." One of the bedsteads is decorated with "a suit of white callicoe curtains and vallens lac'd." Mrs. Eyre possessed plate amounting to £169 and a considerable amount of table and bed linen. Her estate totalled £5,328-12-2, and of this £183-15-0 was in furniture.

The tables show little change during these early years. Oak, pine and black walnut, with occasional cedar and maple, are the chief woods. Captain Andrew Wilson (1710) has a chestnut table, and Thomas Gilbert (1719) a large oval one of beech. Square, round and eight-square are common shapes, but the oval is even more favoured, and the octagon gradually disappears. The slate table is not rare.

Between 1700 and 1720, we meet with the following varieties of chairs: seal-skin, Turkey-work, leather, rush, cane, wicker, patchwork, black, black matted, black bass, black cane, flag, knit, low-back, two-back, three-back, four-back, five-back, mohair, bass, blue serge, green-flowered serge, cane-back with bass bottoms, cane-back with leather bottoms, blue china, flat-back, plate-back, straight-back, and crook-back. The four-back is the same chair that is called four-slat elsewhere during this period. Examples of the four- and five-back (or slat) chair have already been given on page 87. The straight is represented on page 4; and varieties of the flat-back chair, which had a flat splat, appear on pages 39, 65 and 85. An early example of the crook-back chair is shown on page 101 and another variety

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

on page 184. The tendency to stuff the seats of the chairs and cover them with more or less rich material, in addition to Turkey-work and leather, was rapidly increasing. Com-



RUSH-BOTTOM CHAIR

Owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass. See page 349.

fort was no longer largely left to the ministry of cushions. The consequence is that by 1720 cushions, except for window-seats, have largely disappeared from the inventories. We find them sometimes retained, however, with rush- and bass-bottomed chairs. The elbow chair is often specified

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“with cushions.” The elbow and the easy chair are distinct: the arms, back and seat of the latter were all upholstered, the commonest form being the “wing chair” (see facing page 184 and page 293). Charles Shepreeve (1722) owned six elbow chairs, £4-10-0; and one easy chair, £2. The rush-bottom chair represented on page 348 and owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass., is an exceedingly interesting specimen. The legs and stretchers are survivals of an earlier period, while the top rail is “embowed” and the jar-shaped splat pierced (see page 277). A rush-bottom corner chair, sometimes called a “roundabout” chair, with similar legs, is shown on page 364. Joint-stools are still in use in some houses. Bedsteads, high and trundle, still maintain their place, and are adorned with a variety of bright curtains, hangings and rugs or quilts that generally match the window curtains, and often the chair-covers, in hue and material. Varieties of the folding-bed are met with more frequently. Elisha Hopkins (1712) owns a press bedstead worth ninety shillings; and an old one belonging to Samuel Jacklen (1718) is set down at fifteen shillings. The latter was hung with old homespun curtains and valance.

It has already been shown how difficult it is to get precise definitions of terms in the dictionaries that were printed before the middle of the eighteenth century. It is only when we find both the chest with drawers and the case of drawers in the same inventory, that we can be sure that these differed in kind. Even during the reign of Queen Anne, the distinction between the trunk and the chest was not uniformly maintained in the Boston inventories. The chest and the chest with drawers were sometimes covered with leather like the trunk; and the trunk

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

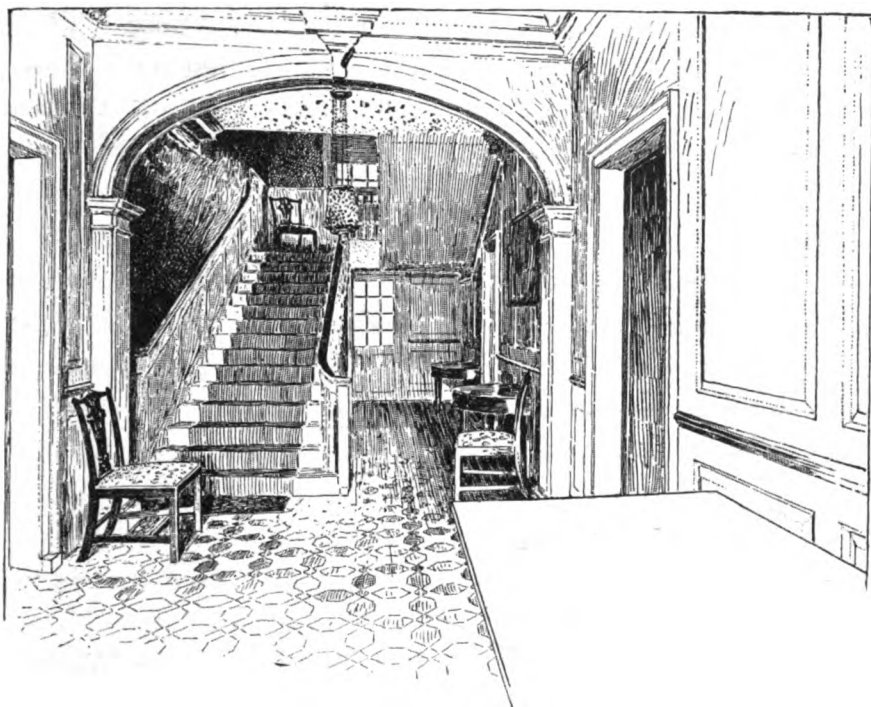
had drawers and sometimes feet like the chest. Thus Ambrose Daws (1706) had an old leather chest with drawers; and Josias Byles (1708) and Captain Andrew Wilson (1710) each owned a trunk with feet. An early chest with drawers of this period that may also have been classified as a trunk with drawers, faces page 344. It is interesting as showing the first step in the development of the chest of drawers from the most elementary form of chest (see pages 215-6). This trunk is covered with red leather and studded with brass nails arranged to form a border of rose, thistle and shamrock. Upon the top is the monogram A. R. It is said to have been the travelling trunk of Queen Anne, and was purchased in Guilford, Surrey, by Mr. Charles Wyllys Elliott in 1870. It is now owned by Mrs. Charles Wyllys Elliott, Cambridge, Mass.

The hall shown on page 351 is that of the Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H. This is the oldest brick building now standing in that town. It was built in 1718 and finished in 1723 at a cost of £6,000. It was originally owned by Captain Archibald Macphedris, a merchant and native of Scotland, who married a daughter of Governor John Wentworth. Their daughter Mary became the wife of the Hon. Jonathan Warner in 1754. Mr. Warner was one of the King's Council and remained a Tory.

A mahogany low case of drawers, or dressing-table, from this house appears on page 331.

Our next typical home is that of Mr. John Mico, a wealthy Boston merchant (£11,230-17-0, 1718). His house contained twelve rooms, besides the entry with staircase, pantry, cellar and wash-house. The Dining-room contained two tables, six Turkey-work and four bass chairs, a looking-glass, four sconces, a good clock worth £10, brass

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



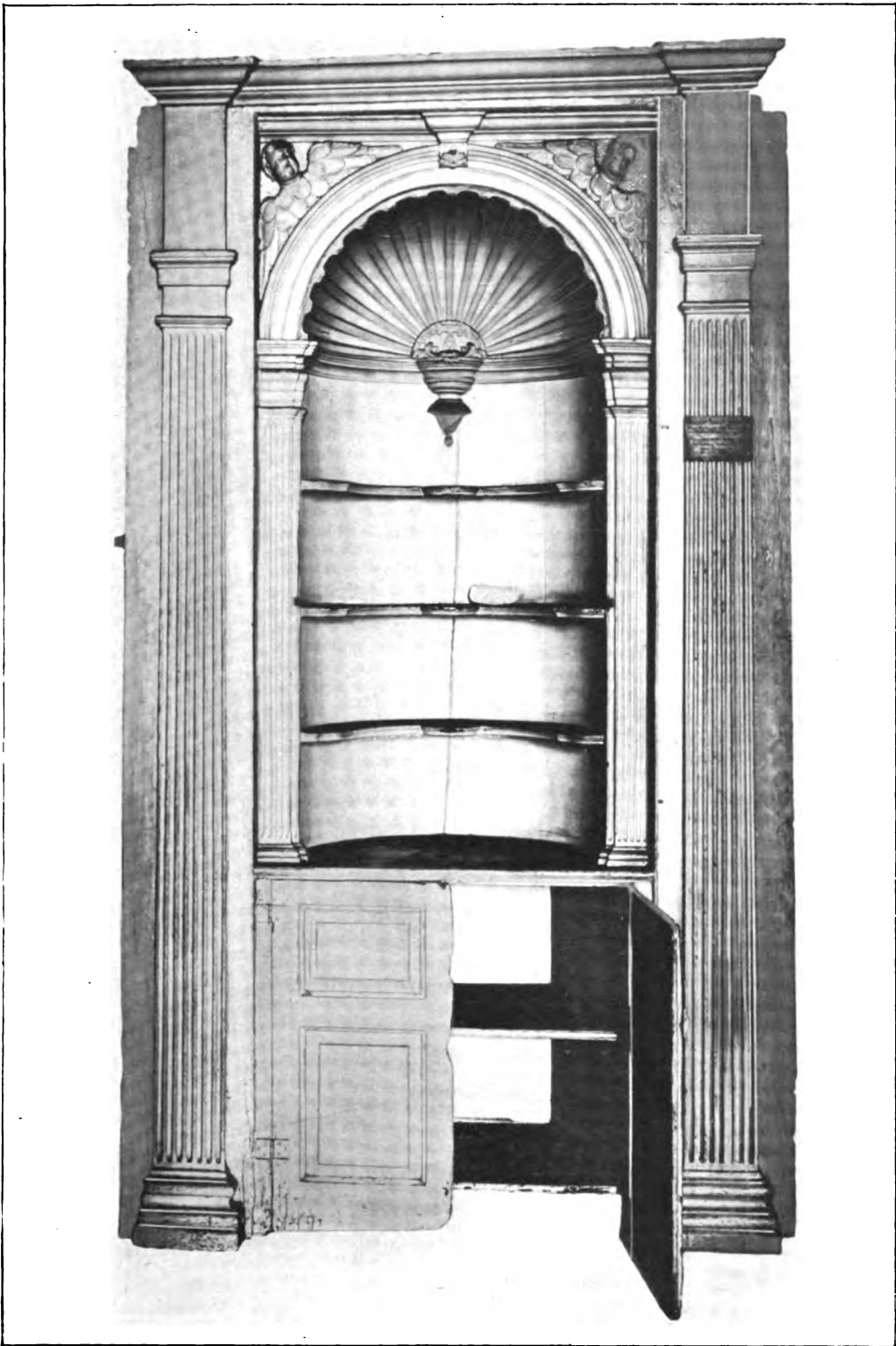
HALL IN THE WARNER HOUSE  
Portsmouth, N. H., built in 1716. See page 350.

andirons, etc., and glass in the “Beaufett,” and “earthenware in the closett.” The Hall contained no bedstead, and seems to have kept its character as a hall. Here we notice a “scriptore,” or writing desk, upon which stand some glasses; there is a chimney table and a chimney glass, a large looking-glass, a tea-table with a set of china upon it; and sixteen chairs and two elbow chairs reach the value of £14. A touch of elegance is bestowed by “four sconces with silver sockets” upon the walls, and five cushions lend comfort to the chairs. Among the ornaments is a flower-pot. The firelight flickers upon brass andirons, etc. The next important room is the “Hall Chamber.” A luxurious

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“silk bed and furniture” worth £30, a couch, squab and pillow, a table, dressing-box and two stands, “a table and twilight,” a chest of drawers, two elbow chairs and cushions, seven mohair chairs and brass hearth-ware make it evident that the eighteenth century is present here. Seven pictures, a “lanthorn,” and twelve leather buckets for readiness in case of fire, of course, hang in the “Staircase and Entry.” A Little Room, made cheerful by a log blazing on the brass andirons, is furnished with a square table, nine leather chairs and a number of books. In the “Chamber over the Little Room” we find six Turkey-work and two cane chairs, a square black table, and an iron chest. “A set of mantle tree ware” brightens the chimney-piece, and beneath it the fire burns upon the usual brass hearth furniture. The chamber over the dining-room contains a looking-glass, a table and chairs, a couch and squab, andirons, and a bed hung with white curtains. The chamber over the kitchen has, in addition to the bedstead a chest with drawers, six old chairs, an old looking-glass and dogs, etc. In the kitchen we find six leather chairs, an oak and a pine table, a looking-glass and 323 ounces of plate. In the four upper chambers there is a mat for a floor worth £2, a press, a screen, a little bed and suit of blue curtains, a fine case of drawers and chairs, trunks, bedsteads, etc. Altogether there are more than sixty-eight chairs in Mr. Mico’s house.

A new feature of the parlour or dining-room that came into general use during these years, and occurs in the above inventory, was the corner cupboard, known as the buffet, variously spelt beaufet, beaufett, beaufait, bofet, etc. On its shelves, glass, china and earthenware were displayed. It was not a movable, but was fixed in a corner of the



**“ BEAUFAIT ”**

*From a house in Vernon Place, Boston. Now in the Old State House, Boston, Mass. See page 353.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

room, rounding out the angle and producing a most pleasing effect. The word does not appear in the early dictionaries of Phillips, Kersey, Cocker, and others, but in 1748, Dyche describes buffet as "a handsome open cupboard or repository for plate, glass, china, etc., which are put there either for ornament or convenience of serving the table." In 1738, Mrs. Mary Blair's "Bofett" contained twenty-three enamelled plates, five burnt china ditto, a pair quart china mugs, seven breakfast bowls, six smaller ditto, a large sugar-pot, twenty-six china cups, twenty-eight china saucers, four china tea-pots, one pair small flowered stands and a small server, one glass double cruet, a hearth brush, and a pair of blue and white china mugs. The total value was £32-3-0.

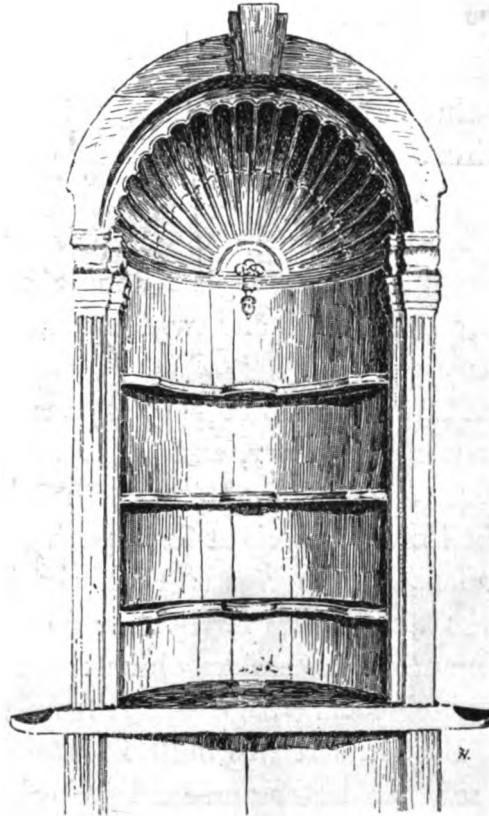
In William Clarke's "Bofet" (1742) were twelve china plates, a delft pot and cover, and large and small china bowls. In 1744, a "Hall Bofet" contains a blue shagreen case with eight knives and eight forks with silver caps, and eight silver spoons; another case with six ivory-handled knives and forks with silver "ferrils"; and six other white-handled knives and forks, besides china and glass.

The "beaufait" facing page 352 is from the house in Vernon Place, Boston. It was built in 1696 by William Clough, who sold the house and land to John Pulling in 1698. The latter left it to his sister, Mrs. Richard Pitcher, who sold it to William Merchant, brother-in-law of Governor Hutchinson. It was purchased in 1758 by Captain Fortescue Vernon and remained in his family for about seventy-five years. The "beaufait" is ornamented with cherubs' heads in the spandrils and the hollowed shell. A handsomer example of the shell appears in the "boufet" from the Barton homestead on page 354. This was made

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FCREFATHERS

in 1750. It was presented to the Worcester Society of Antiquity, Worcester, Mass., by Mr. Bernard Barton in 1894.

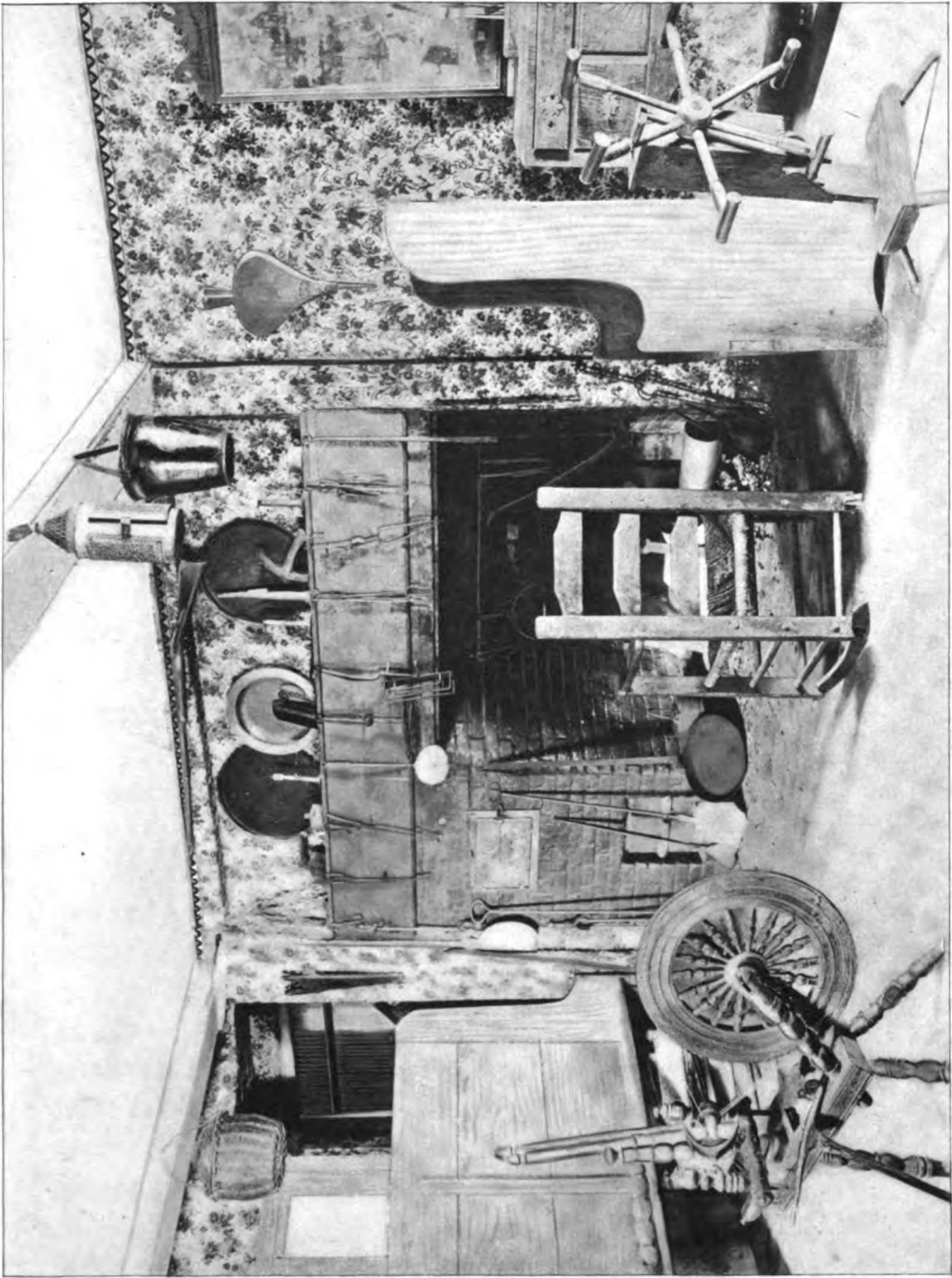
The one represented on page 363 has the advantage



“BOUFET” FROM THE BARTON HOMESTEAD, WORCESTER  
Made in 1750. Now owned by the Worcester Society of Antiquity, Worcester, Mass. See page 353.

over the other in standing in the spot for which it was made. This is from the Whipple House, Ipswich, Mass. It is furnished with glass doors and is filled with valuable old china.

The buffet from the Peabody House, Boxford, Mass.,



KITCHEN IN THE ROOMS OF THE CONCORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
*Concord, Mass. See page 358.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

torn down in 1863, is now owned by Mr. Edwin N. Peabody, in Salem.

Though the rooms at the beginning of the century were generally heated with open fires, yet stoves sometimes appear in the inventories. These were generally of Dutch manufacture and were obtained from New York. In 1709, Joseph Bridgham has a large Dutch stove worth ten pounds. In 1712, Elisha Hopkins has one valued at ninety shillings. German stoves also were made by Christopher Sauer, of Germantown, and then came the Franklin stove. The economical advantage of coal as a fuel was being felt; and the papers announce the arrival of Newcastle coal with increasing frequency about 1740. "Cole grates" frequently appear in the inventories before that date: Samuel White's parlour is supplied with "a grate for coal, £6," in 1736.

New styles of grates were constantly being introduced, but the old andirons still existed side by side with them. In 1760, "a new imported and neatly polished coal grate" is advertised; and, in 1764, "a handsome china stove, suitable for a gentleman's hall or any large room." The front of the hearth was frequently a marble slab, and the fireplace was often tiled in the Dutch fashion. In 1761, "a set of tiles for chimney" is advertised; and Dutch chimney tile from three shillings a dozen, in 1772. The old portable braziers, or chafing-dishes, are still in use and various kinds of "furnaces" are found. In 1739, a kitchen contains an old brass furnace of forty-three pounds weight, worth only three shillings! New England was now manufacturing brass-ware of her own, and undoubtedly introduced new patterns in accordance with her progressive spirit in all handiwork. Jonathan Jackson was a brazier

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

who died in 1736, and following his imported wares comes a list of "Goods of New England manufacture." It includes brass hand-basons, candlesticks and knockers, tools, pots, skillets, kettles, plates, saucers, spoons, stirrups, spurs, staples, cast dogs, brass-headed dogs, wrought dogs, iron backs and warming-pans. The dogs' heads that had given their name to the object had given place to other designs. One of these we know was the *fleur-de-lys*, for Captain John Welland has a pair of "flower de luce dogs" in his hall chamber. The customary tongs, shovel and bellows (the latter frequently with a brass nose or spout) are supplemented with the poker on the advent of coal. William Clark has tongs and poker for his dining-room fire in 1742. About 1760, we find steel fire-irons coming in. They then seem to be more fashionable than those with brass handles. John Morley (1765) had two sets of steel andirons, shovel and tongs appraised at forty-five shillings, and four other sets, the most expensive of which amounted to six shillings. Lieutenant-Governor Andrew Oliver (1774) also had steel andirons, etc., in his best living-room; in others, he had brass hearths, and dogs with brass tops.

The mantel-piece is ornamented with glass and china images. Earthenware, "old things," images and cups and "mantel tree setts" are some of the ornaments recorded (see page 359). Thomas Down (1709) has furniture for two mantel shelves, £1; and Captain John Myles (1711) two muslin mantel cloths. Varieties multiplied as the century advanced. Bronzes were scarce, but china, glass, earthenware and alabaster cups, vases and images were plentiful. Carved work is sometimes in evidence also. An entry in 1738 tells of a small carved image sitting in a chair; and in 1744, two wooden images cost twenty-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

four shillings, which price implies more than rough carving. Though the porcelain came from abroad, there was a certain amount of pottery made here by skilled immigrants. In 1738, the will of a Boston potter named Cur-tice Champnoine is recorded. Some of the ornaments in use before the middle of the century are as follows: a large china woman, fifteen alabaster parrots, four china images, two fine large china women, earthen goblets, two china men on horseback, two small china women, two china toads with men on their backs, two china cows with men, two china friars, two china pillars, two china foots, four alabaster images, delft flower pots, a figure and five busts. The busts most in favour were those of great statesmen and especially of military leaders ancient and modern, such as Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great, Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. Shakespeare and Milton are also favourite subjects.

Above the "mantle tree" thus adorned, was either a picture or a mirror. The chimney-picture was often to be found in the parlour. Among many instances, Henry Franklin owns "a picture for a chimney" in 1725. Another article used to decorate the space above the mantel-piece in some rooms was that quaint piece of home-made art-work known as the sampler. It is evident that some of these were highly prized. One, at least, is worthy of advertisement, for, in 1757, the *Boston Gazette* announces that Samuel Smith, at his Vendue house on Coleman's Wharf, will sell a gorgeous bed complete, and a "chimney-piece imitating Adam and Eve in Paradise wrot with a needle after the best manner."

We have seen that the ladies of other colonies beautified their homes with needlework which was highly prized, and



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

that the art of the needle was taught in New York by professional adepts (see page 308). It is not surprising to find similar advertisements in Boston. In 1755, the *Boston Gazette* announces that "Mrs. Hiller still continues to keep school in Hanover Street, a little below the Orange-Tree, where young Ladies may be taught Wax-work, Transparent and Filligree, painting on glass, Quillwork and Featherwork, Japanning, Embroidering with silver and gold, Tent-stitch, likewise, the Royal Family to be seen in waxwork."

In 1763, Jane Day also had a school in Williams Court, Boston, where she taught "all kinds of needle-work, embroidery in gold and silver, all kinds of coloured work, Dresden, etc." In 1764, Nathaniel Oliver opened a school for boys near the Drawbridge, and Mrs. Oliver taught needlework.

The productions of skilled fingers were highly valued; as early as 1712, Nathaniel Byfield, of Bristol, owned a piece of needlework wrought upon white satin, worth no less than £4.

The importance of the New England kitchen occurs from the fact that in many cases it was the living-room. It changed but little from that of the seventeenth century. Two views of the kitchen of the Concord Antiquarian Society facing page 315 and page 354 show the furniture and utensils common to almost every home.

Early in the century, the mirror had a black or gilt frame. Sometimes the price reached a high figure, as the carving grew more elaborate. Towards the middle of the century, chimney-glasses with carved walnut or gilt frames ranging in value from thirty to eighty pounds are not uncommon. They were generally supplied with arms for candles. Nathaniel Cunningham (1748) owned one with



BEDROOM IN HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE

*Lexington, Mass. See page 374.*

NEW YORK  
LIBRARY  
AND  
MUSEUM  
OF THE  
CITY OF NEW YORK

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

a gilt-edged walnut frame, £120; another with walnut frame and brass arms, £37-10-0; and a third with a gilt frame. Some of the work was done by native carvers. A member of this profession was George Robinson, who left an estate of fifteen hundred pounds in 1737. His granddaughter, Sarah Blowers, received a bequest of "my mantletree sett of carved work and sconces." This was twenty years before Chippendale's publications could have influenced those engaged on this kind of carved work.

One of the Boston carvers was a Mr. Burbeck. In the town records under date of January 13, 1768, we read:

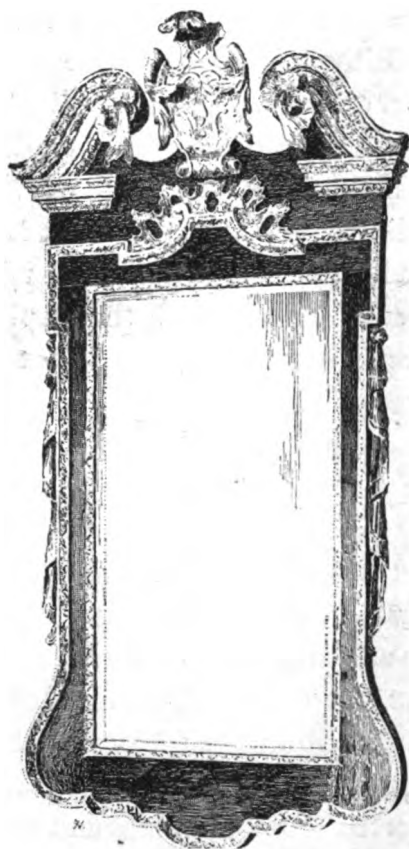
"Mr. Burbeck, who carves the capitals for Faneuil Hall, was sent for, when he engaged to get the carved work finished and put up before the latter end of next month"—he was at the same time told that he should have his pay out of the "money raised by the present lottery."

The walls of the rooms were adorned in the best houses with paintings in carved, moulded and gilded frames. Black and japanned frames also were common. The ordinary homes and halls and stairways of the richer class contained more mezzotints than any other kind of pictures. The inventories rarely mention the subjects, but we gather them from the newspapers. In 1757 we read in the *Boston Gazette*: "Imported from London and to be sold by Nathaniel Warner in Fish Street, a variety of new-fashioned looking-glasses and sconces, and also a variety of metzitinto Pictures painted on glass, double Frames, neatly carved and gilt, viz., the Royal Family, the Judges of England, the Months, the Seasons, the Elements, very handsome views and sea-pieces; the Rakes and Harlot's Progress; maps; gold leaf."

The more ornate picture frames were imported from

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

London in most cases, because the work there could be done more cheaply than in Boston. Thus history antedates as well as repeats itself! In 1743, the Selectmen of

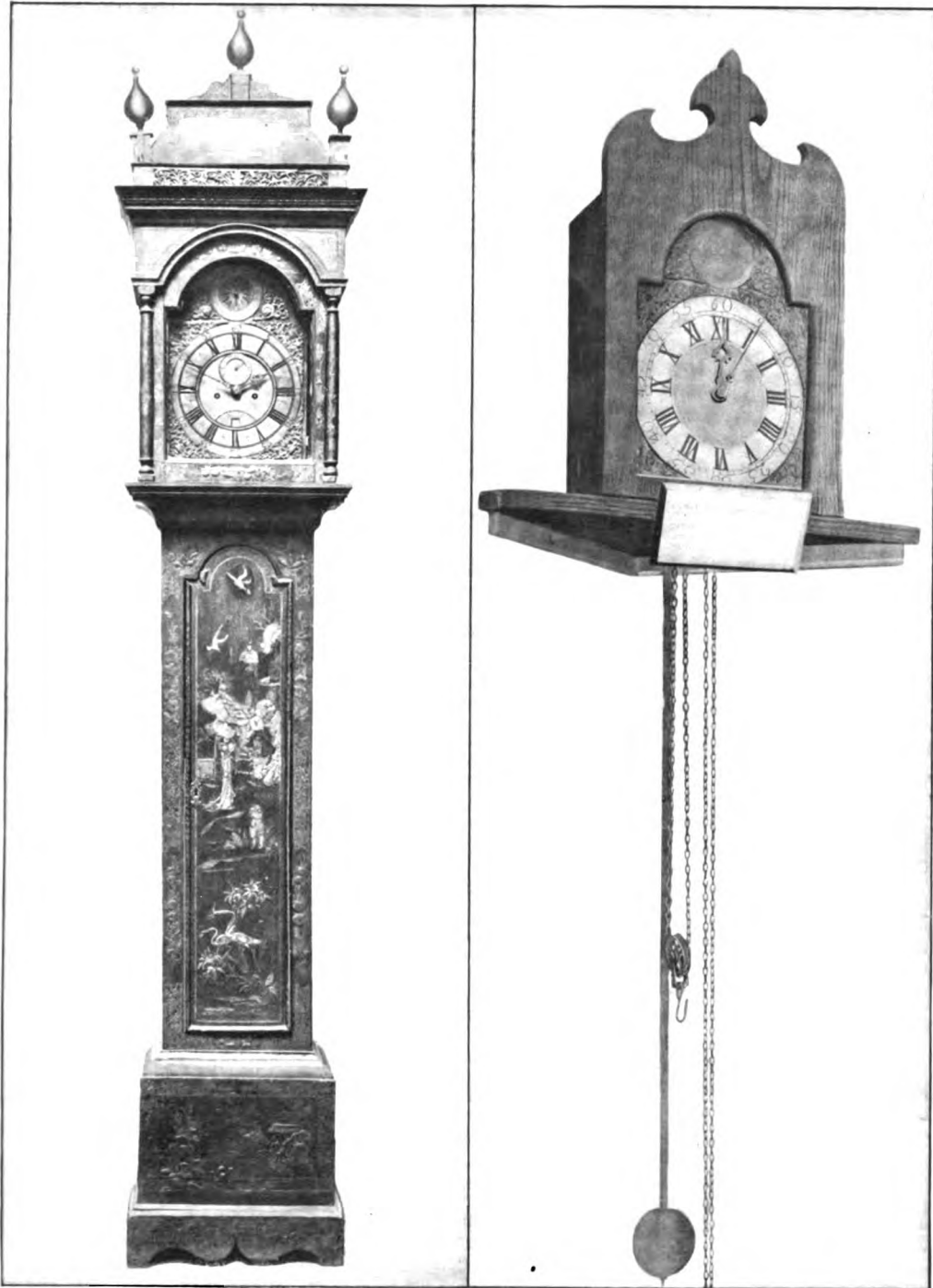


MAHOGANY AND GILT MIRROR

Owned by the Talcott family, now by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford. See page 361.

Boston wanted a frame for Smibert's portrait of Peter Fan-euil; they therefore wrote December 7th to Christopher Kilby, Esq., to the following effect:

“ We find upon inquiry that a frame for said picture can be got in London cheaper and better than with us, we



**JAPANNED CLOCK**

*From the Hancock House, Boston. Owned by Miss Lucy Gray Swett and preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass. See page 376.*

**CLOCK**

*Made by Richard Manning, Ipswich, Mass., in 1767. Now in the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass. See page 325.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

therefore beg the favour of you, Sir, to procure and send a neat gold carved frame of eight feet in length and five feet in width by the first ship in as small a box as may be, as it will reduce the freight." They hoped it might be bought for about eight guineas.

An exceedingly handsome mirror of the period is shown on page 360. It is of mahogany and is profusely ornamented with gilt. This belongs to Mrs. Wainwright of Hartford, Conn., having descended to her through the Talcott family.

Tables are still made principally of oak and black walnut; very rarely do we find one of ash and chestnut. Mahogany tables are very scarce for many years. There are many estates from 1730 to 1740 of between two and eight thousand pounds in which none of mahogany are recorded. After 1750 they are plentiful. Marble tables of different sizes and colours are advertised in 1755; mahogany stand tables, 1758; marble table with mahogany frame, 1760; a neat mahogany bureau table, 1761; and mahogany tables with claw feet, 1768.

Four tables are shown facing page 318. One has already been described on page 321. Of the four specimens the one in the upper left-hand corner is the handsomest. It was owned by Silas Deane, first minister from the United States to France. The top is a solid piece of mahogany, measuring  $38\frac{3}{8}$  inches in diameter. The edge is slightly raised. The acanthus is carved on the legs, which end in dog's feet clasping a ball. Washington, Lafayette, Rochambeau and Beaumarchais are said to have taken tea upon it. This piece of furniture is in the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. The table in the upper right-hand corner is also of mahogany, but is of smaller size



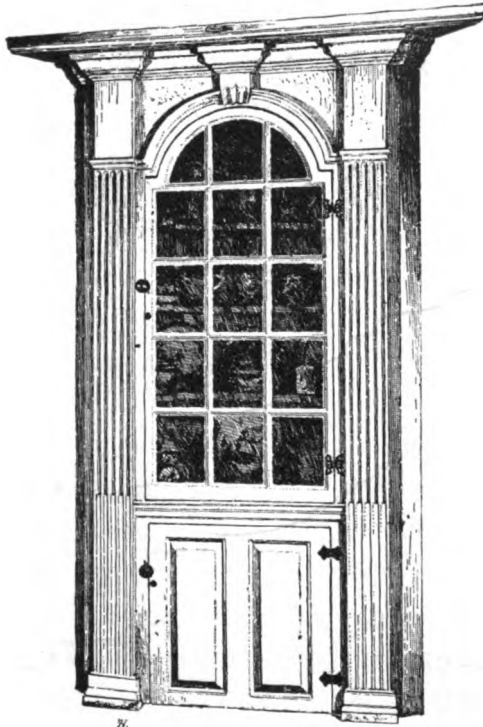
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

than the one just described. It was in the wedding outfit of Lois Orne in 1770. This is now in the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass. The table in the lower left-hand corner is of painted wood and a piece of iron is under each of the three feet. This table belonged to Nathaniel Silsbee, of Salem, in the early part of the eighteenth century, and is now in possession of his descendant, Mrs. Edward C. Pickering, Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. Another table of mahogany with falling leaves appears on page 379. This belongs to Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn.; and a square table owned by the Misses Burnett, at *Elmwood*, Cambridge, faces page 368, with a dumb-waiter of mahogany, also owned by them. The latter frequently occurs in the inventories.

The tea-table is present in every home that has any claim to comfort. In the early part of the century it is usually made of oak or walnut, and the japanned tea-table is very general until mahogany takes its place. This table was lower and smaller than the ordinary table, and it held nothing but the tea-service with which it was customary to keep it set. Tea-tables occur quite early. "The leaf of a tea-table" that was being made by William Howell in 1717 shows that at that date it had falling leaves. The style changed, for in 1736 John Waldo's tea-table, although worth twenty-five shillings, is described as old-fashioned. At that date japanned tea-tables are numerous and within the means of ordinary people. Fifteen shillings is enough for James Jackson's in 1735. The "tea-board and furniture" are nearly always mentioned in company. About the middle of the century the India tea-table is most fashionable. One of these belonging to Peter Cunningham (1748) is typical of the most fashionable equipment in

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

vogue. It was set with ten china cups and saucers and five handle-cups, a slop-basin and plate beneath, milk-pot, tea-pot and plate, and a boat for spoons. The silver spoons and sugar tongs are classed separately among the plate, and exclusive of these the value of this little table and tea-



BUFFET

From the Whipple House, Ipswich, Mass. See page 354.

service amounted to the large sum of forty pounds. It will be noticed that ten of the cups had no handles and the five that had no saucers were therefore more like mugs in form. The tea in this instance was kept in "a shagreen tea-chest with silver canisters and sugar ditto, £100." Mr. Cunningham, therefore, spared no expense on this

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

important feature of contemporary social life, nor was he an exception; a table and complete set of china from £25 up is quite a common item. The above articles were in the Great Parlour. In the Great Chamber up-stairs there



RUSH-BOTTOM CORNER CHAIR

From the Goodhue family. Now owned by the Essex Institute, Salem. See page 349.

is a "tea chest with brass silvered and three pewter canisters," besides a quantity of china, ornamental and useful. There is no tea-table with the service spread, because the guests were not entertained here, but a walnut breakfast table is noted, which shows that the first meal of the day was often taken in the sleeping apartments in wealthy homes. The frequent presence of so much china in the bedrooms of the period is thus accounted for. When ma-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

hogany prevailed, the tea-table sometimes attained much larger dimensions. Very small tea-tables were in use until long after the Revolution.

Black chairs were in use for many years. It is strange to find this sombre tint such a favourite until nearly the middle of the century. Henry Franklin (1725) possessed a high-priced black chest of drawers, a black table, twelve black bass-bottomed chairs, black stands, a black walnut escritoire and a looking-glass with a black frame. This room, however, was exceptionally funereal. Thomas Walker (1726) has a turned, black glass-case, a looking-glass in a black frame, and a black chest of drawers nailed.

Black was usually confined to the chairs, several varieties of which were painted or stained that hue. Some of those recorded are black frames, black cane, six-backed black, black matted, black-frame stuffed and covered. Straw chairs were also common during this period; the prices show that some kinds belonged to the better class. James Jackson's eight open-back chairs with straw bottoms were worth seven shillings each in 1735. Other chairs recorded before 1740 are carved-top, flat-back, crook-back, straight-back, high-back and low-back leather, red leather, leather with banister backs, coloured cane, chairs of the same with the bed; damask, slit-back, straight slat, and rush-bottom crooked backwards. All the kinds mentioned on page 347 still persist, and cushions sometimes accompany those with rush or cane seats. Arthur Savage (£5,263; 1735) owned twelve cane and two elbow chairs, £20; and twelve silk cushions, £8; George Bethune (£7,637; 1736) had an easy chair covered with red velvet and cushion, £20. When the wood is mentioned, it is most frequently walnut. In 1736, walnut chairs with leather bottoms are

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

appraised at thirty-five, and with "stuff bottoms and calico cases" at twenty-five shillings each. Mahogany was not yet used by the Boston chair-makers. It is only just beginning to appear in the inventories. John Jekyl's front parlour contains a table of that wood, valued at £3-10-0, in 1733. In 1735, Mary Walker has a dressing-box, worth only five shillings, japanned; while ten pounds is



DRESSING-TABLE

From the collection of the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass., owned by Mr. Lemon. See page 368.

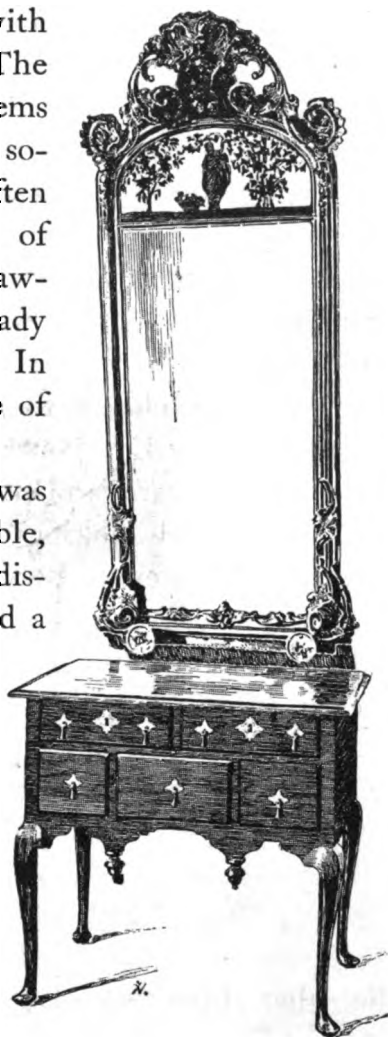
the value of one belonging to Captain John Chernock, in 1723. The term "case" of drawers seldom occurs in the early Boston inventories, nor is any distinction drawn between the high and low. However, the chest with drawers and the carved chests were now old-fashioned, and the new kinds stood on somewhat slender cabriole legs and were what are now called "high-boys" and "low-boys." Captain John Ventiman, 1724, owns a "chest of drawers and table thereto belonging, £4;" and George Campbell, 1735,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

has a "black walnut chest with drawers and table, £15." The "table thereto belonging" seems to be the lower part of the so-called "high-boy." More often the description of this piece of furniture is simply "chest of drawers and table." We have already had many instances of this. In 1709, it is called a "table case of drawers."

The low case of drawers was generally used as a dressing-table, as some of the Boston entries distinctly imply. In 1709, we find a dressing-table with drawers; in 1732, Col. William Tailer has a table, dressing-glass and chest of drawers, £20; and in 1736, the Rev. Thomas Harward has a walnut dressing-table with drawers. They were made of mahogany, before the latter date, for those who cared for that wood. A good example with its original dressing-glass, is shown on page 331. This comes from the Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H., which was completed in 1723. All of the furniture in this house was imported from England, and some of it at that date.

Earlier and simpler styles are shown on pages 366 and



CARVED AND GILT LOOKING-GLASS  
AND A DRESSING-TABLE

Now in the rooms of the Concord Antiquarian  
Society, Concord, Mass. See page 368.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

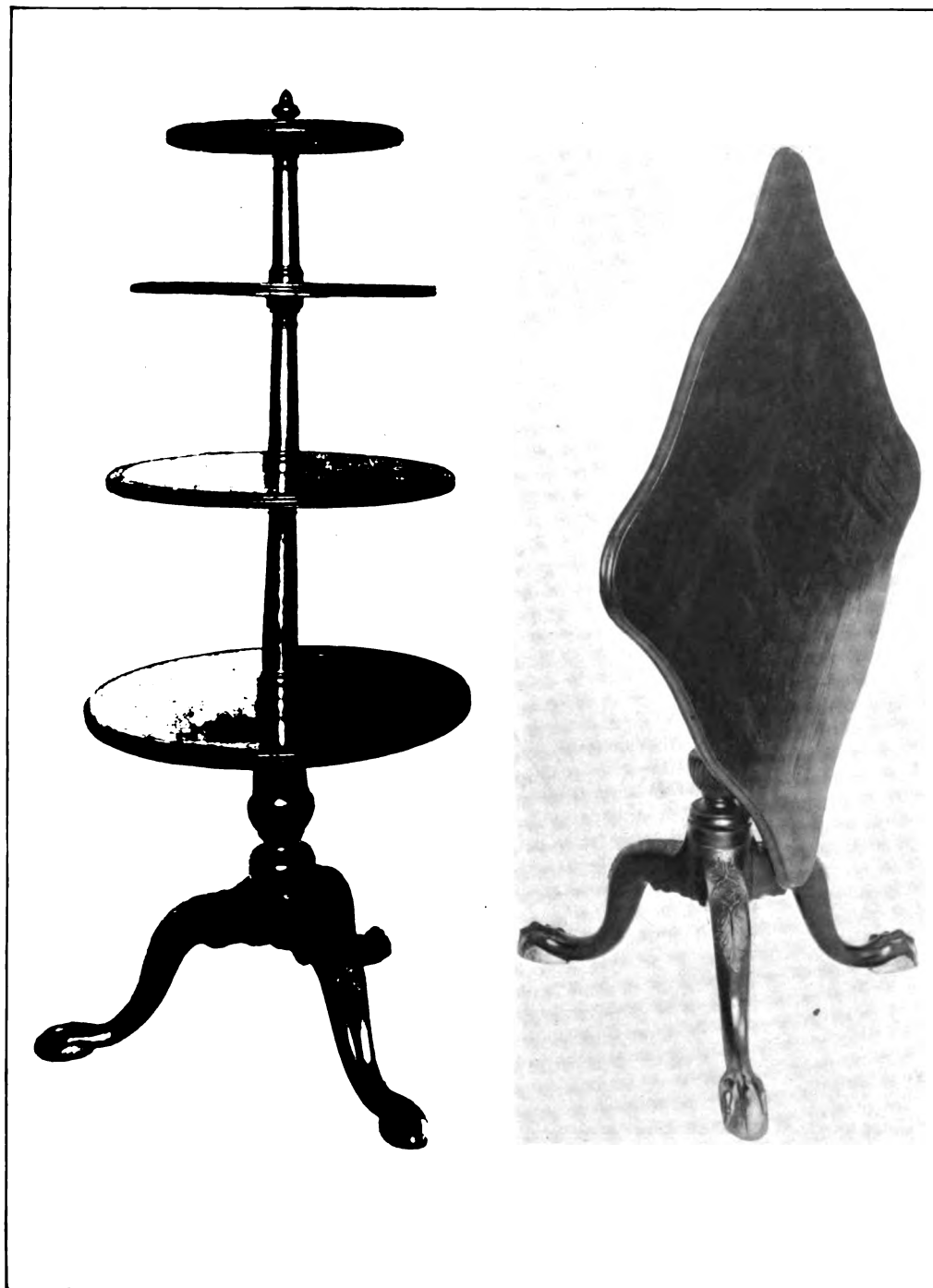
367. That on page 343, belonged to Governor Dudley and (1647-1720) now owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, has the plain feet, cusped front and drop brass handles that were already a fashion before 1700, though the styles lasted till long afterwards in New England furniture of somewhat simpler form.

Another, from the Collection of the Wayside Inn, appears on page 366, and one from the Concord Antiquarian Society is shown on page 367. A case of drawers that answers more closely to the description faces page 384. It is owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass.

Japanned ware is plentiful all through this period. Besides clocks and looking-glass frames, we have tea-tables, "chests of drawers and table," tables, corner tables, waiters and coffee-pots. Some of these reach high prices. Not only black, but blue japanned ware sometimes occurs in the inventories: in 1730 a blue japanned looking-glass costs three pounds. Oriental goods are exceedingly scarce in the homes: quite an exception is the presence of an India cabinet such as belongs to Edward Lyde in 1724.

An example of a japanned looking-glass, owned by the Essex Institute, faces page 326.

It was not only on the tea-table, buffet and mantel-shelf that china and glass were displayed. The dressing-table also had its full share of ornaments of this nature. Captain John Welland's hall chamber (1737) contained a handsome "black walnut case of drawers and table," and on it stood no fewer than fifty-five pieces of china. William Clarke's escritoire (1742) was even finer, and it was ornamented with eight pounds' worth of china. When the escritoire was not surmounted by a bookcase, it was customary to ornament its flap top with busts, or china-ware.



**MAHOGANY DUMBWAITER AND SQUARE TABLE**

*Owned by the Misses Burnett, Elmwood, Cambridge, Mass. See page 362.*



1911

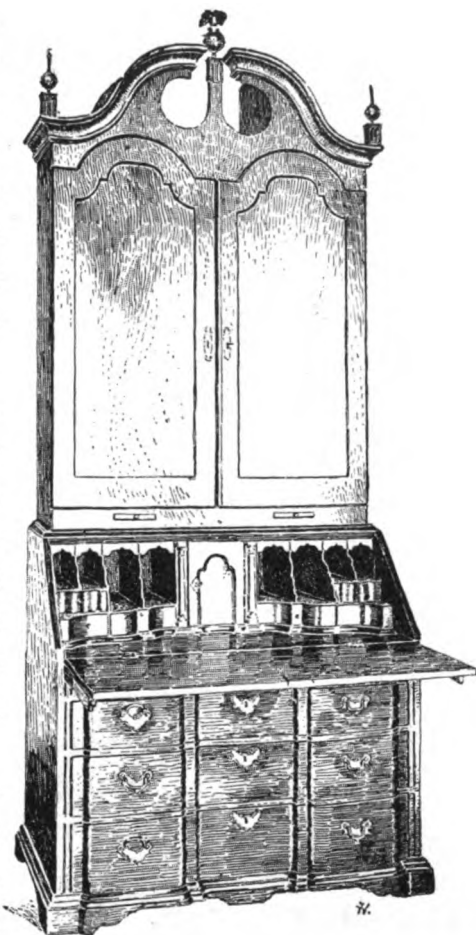
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The *escritoire* or “scretore” (which has been already described on page 220) increases in ornamental importance as the years pass. It is made of all woods, and the styles are almost endless. Some of these announced in the newspapers are as follows: Screw-tore, 1725; a beautiful mahogany desk and bookcase, 1755; red cedar desk, 1757; handsome maple desk, 1758; fine scretore, 1759; mahogany bureau with a writing table, 1762; elegant bookcase with glass doors, 1768.

The term *bureau*, generally spelt “buroe,” appears in New England about 1720. A “bureau desk” is among the possessions of the deceased David Craigie in 1721. It was valued at seventy shillings. In 1739, a “buroe table”

(eleven shillings) occurs; and another in 1751; a “buro table with drawers” costs fifteen pounds in 1747.

The desk and bookcase shown above is of apple tree and black walnut. It was owned by Governor John Wentworth and was in his home on Pleasant Street, Portsmouth, N. H., in 1767. When his effects were confiscated, it became



GOVERNOR JOHN WENTWORTH'S  
DESK AND BOOKCASE

Owned by his great-great-grandnephew, Mr.  
Charles E. Wentworth, Portsmouth, N. H.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the property of the Rev. Samuel Haven and remained in his home on Pleasant Street until 1897. At that date it passed to his great-grandson, Mr. Alexander H. Ladd, who gave it to his daughter, Elizabeth, the wife of Mr. Charles E. Wentworth, the great-great-grandnephew of Governor John Wentworth.

Another very handsome escritoire faces page 374. It belonged to Mr. Joseph Waters, of Salem, and is now in the home of his grandson, Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. This is of rich San Domingo mahogany and furnished with fine brasses.

The chest of drawers became heavy and massive after the middle of the century and the larger pieces were in two parts, like the high cases of drawers. They were then called "chest-upon-chest." They often had ornamental carved tops like the bookcases. Many varieties are advertised. It will be noticed that even when the lower part was a table with drawers, the distinction between case and chest is not maintained. A few of these advertised read: "Very handsome new black walnut chest of drawers and table and beautiful mahogany case of drawers with an Ogier top and brassed off in the best manner," 1756; "a beautiful mahogany case of drawers with a compass top;" also a "mahogany case of drawers with an O G top," 1757; a mahogany case of drawers with an arched head, 1759; a very neat black walnut case of drawers, 1759; a new fashion case of drawers, a neat mahogany case of drawers and chamber table and a large handsome mahogany case of drawers and table, 1760. The great mahogany wardrobes were also being constructed now, for in the latter year a "large mahogany clothes press with three draws" is advertised for sale.



**MAHOGANY LIQUOR CASE**

*Inlaid with satin wood. Owned by Mr. Walter Hosmer, Wettersfield, Conn. See page 380.*

**EZRA RIPLEY'S WRITING CHAIR**

*Afterwards used by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and now owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass. See page 398.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

A very handsome mahogany chest-upon-chest is represented on this page. There are nine drawers altogether, the top central one being ornamented with the



MAHOGANY CHEST-UPON-CHEST OF DRAWERS  
Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn.

outspread fan. The brass escutcheons are very decorative. This piece belonged to the Talcott family and is now owned by Mrs Wainwright, Hartford, Conn. Another example of a chest-upon-chest occurs on page 397.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The first piece is of the same period as the beautiful desk shown facing page 340. The latter is of rich mahogany very dark in colour and is furnished with handsome brass escutcheons. The desk has four drawers.

Captain John Bonner, in 1722, published "The Town of Boston in New England, Engraven and Printed by Fra: Dewing and sold by Captain Bonner and William Price against ye Town House." On the margin of the plan was printed the following: "Streets, 42; Lanes, 36; Alleys, 22; Houses, near 3,000, 1,000 Brick, the rest Timber; near 12,000 people."

This plan helped to adorn the walls of many an entry, and frequently appears in the inventories as "a prospect of the city of Boston."

Neal, who published his history about 1720, says: "Their customs and manners are much the same with the English: Their grand festivals are the day of the annual election of magistrates at Boston, and the commencement at Cambridge, when business is pretty much laid aside, and the people are as cheerful among their friends as the English are at Christmas. . . .

"In the concerns of civil life, as in their dress, tables, and conversation, they affect to be as much English as possible; there is no fashion in London but in three or four months is to be seen in Boston. In short, the only difference between an Old and New Englishman is his religion."

Turning now to a typical home, that of Col. William Tailer (L8,366-19-3; 1732), we notice that the furniture in his Hall consists of 6 elbow chairs, a dozen cane elbow chairs, 9 old chairs, a walnut table, a small table, and a teaboard and furniture; two pairs of old-fashioned



### MAHOGANY BEDSTEAD

*With ball-and-claw feet and old hangings. Owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass. See page 386.*



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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

andirons, tongs, and shovels show that there are two fires here; and there are a hammock, 6 maps, and a great deal of glass, including 3 dozen wine glasses.

In the Back Parlour there are 3 tables of old oak, one large and one small walnut, 8 old chairs and an old clock, a black looking-glass, 15 old pictures on the walls, and china, etc., in the closet. The Bedroom has in it a bedstead, which, with its furniture, is only worth £7-15-0; an old escritoire worth £3, two old looking-glasses, 6 cane chairs and "6 new-fashion chairs," an easy chair, two bass bottom stools, another escritoire of walnut, also worth £3; an old carpet, and shovel, tongs and andirons.

In the Best Chamber we see a table and dressing-glass and chest of drawers valued at £20. The 6 chairs are of damask and there is a joint-stool. Brass andirons, etc., and 10 pictures add brightness. The Rubb'd Chamber has a bedstead with damask'd curtains and a feather bed upon it weighing a hundred pounds. There is a handsome cabinet here worth £7, and an oak table valued at 13 shillings. A small looking-glass, a curtain for a field bed, worth £3-10-0, 4 alabaster pieces, valued at £2, and 16 pictures complete the furniture of this room.

About 1735, John Oldmixon remarks: "The Conversation of the Town of Boston is as polite as most of the Cities and Towns of England; many of their merchants having traded into Europe and those that stayed at home having the advantage of society with travelers. So that a gentleman from London would almost think himself at home in Boston when he observes the numbers of people, their houses, their furniture, their tables, their dress and conversation, which, perhaps, is as splendid and showy as that of the most considerable tradesman in London."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

At this period, the famous Hancock House on Beacon Hill was being built (1737), and until it was demolished a few years ago, it was the last of the great mansions standing that could show what the stately homes of old Boston were like. This house was built by Thomas Hancock, son of the Rev. John Hancock, the kitchen of whose house, now owned by the Lexington Historical Society, is shown facing page 155, and a bedroom facing page 358.

Mr. Hancock's idea was to beautify his home without as well as within, and accordingly he sent to London for choice fruit trees, "dwarf trees and Espaliers, two or three dozen yew trees, hollys and jessamin," vines, seeds and tulip roots, which, however, did not thrive in the cold, bleak winds of Boston. In 1737, he sent for "380 squares of best London crown glass, all Cutt Exactly 18 Inches long and 11 Inches wide of a Suitable Thickness to the Largeness of the Glass, free from Blisters and by all means be careful it don't wind or worp; 100 Squares Ditto, 12 Inches Long, 8½ wide of the Same Goodness as above."

On January 23, 1737-8, we find him writing from Boston to Mr. John Rowe, Stationer, London, as follows:

"Sir, Inclosed you have the Dimensions of a Room for a Shaded Hanging to be Done after the Same Pattern I have sent per Capt. Tanner who will Deliver it to you. It's for my own House and Intreat the favour of you to Get it Done for me to Come Early in the Spring, or as Soon as the nature of the Thing will admitt. The pattern is all was Left of a Room Lately Come over here, and it takes much in ye Town and will be the only paper-hanging for Sale here wh. am of opinion may Answer well. Therefore desire you by all means to get mine well Done and as Cheap as Possible, and if they can make it more Beau-



**MAHOGANY SECRETARY AND BOOKCASE**

*With original brasses. In the house of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. See page 370.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

tifull by adding more Birds flying here and there, with Some Landskips at the Bottom, Should like it well. Let the Ground be the Same Colour of the Pattern. At the Top and Bottom was a narrow Border of about 2 Inches wide wh. would have to mine. About 3 or 4 Years ago my friend Francis Wilks, Esq., had a hanging Done in the Same manner but much handsomer Sent over here from Mr. Sam Waldon of this place, made by one Dunbar in Aldermanbury, where no doubt he, or some of his successors may be found. In the other parts of these Hangings are Great Variety of Different Sorts of Birds, Peacocks, Macoys, Squirril, Monkys, Fruit and Flowers, etc. But a Greater Variety in the above mentioned of Mr. Waldon's and Should be fond of having mine done by the Same hand if to be mett with. I design if this pleases me to have two Rooms more done for myself. I Think they are handsomer and Better than Painted hangings Done in Oyle, so I Beg your particular Care in procuring this for me, and that the patterns may be Taken Care off and Return'd with my Goods."

He is still adding to his decorations in 1740, for on March 22, he writes :

"I pray the favour of you to Enquire what a pr. of Capitolls will cost me to be Carved in London, of the Corinthian Order, 16½ inches one Way and 9 y<sup>e</sup> Other,— and to be well Done."

Mr. Hancock was one of those wealthy and fashionable citizens who was not satisfied with the ordinary articles made here, or even imported for general sale. He is constantly writing for furniture and table ware. For example, he orders, "1 Box Double Flint Glass ware, 6 Quart Decanters, 6 Pint do., 2 doz. handsome new fash<sup>d</sup> wine

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Glasses, 6 pair Beakers, Sorted, all plain, 2 pr. pint Cans, 2 pr.  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint do., 6 Beer Glasses, 12 Water Glasses, and 2 Doz. Jelly Glasses."

On December 20, 1738, he sends to Mr. Wilks this order, which is of especial interest to us, inasmuch as the clock in question appears facing page 360:

"I Desire the favour of you to procure for me and Send with my Spring Goods a Handsome Chiming Clock of the newest fashion,—the work neat & good, with a Good Walnutt Tree Case Veneer'd work, with Dark lively branches,—on the Top instead of Balls, let there be three handsome Carv'd figures, Gilt with burnished Gold. I'd have the Case without the figures to be 10 foot long, the price not to Exceed 20 Guineas, & as it's for my own use, I beg your particular Care in buying of it at the Cheapest Rate. I'm advised to apply to one Mr. Marmaduke Storr at the foot of Lond<sup>n</sup> Bridge,—but as you are best Judge I leave it to you to purchase it where you think proper."

The handsome clock facing page 360 was, in all probability, the one selected, for upon its dial the maker's name reads: "Marm<sup>d</sup> Storrford of London Bridge." The case, however, is japanned. This clock was purchased from the Hancock house in 1793, by the wife of the Honourable William Gray, of Boston, and is now owned by Miss Lucy Gray Swett, of Boston. It is preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Mr. Hancock lived in the home he had built and furnished with so much pleasure until his death in 1764, when his nephew, John, became its proprietor. A portrait of the latter by John Singleton Copley hung over the mantelpiece in the dining-room, 17x25 feet, that was decorated with moulded panels; and portraits of Thomas Han-



**JAMES BOWDOIN'S DESK**

*Owned by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. See page 388.*



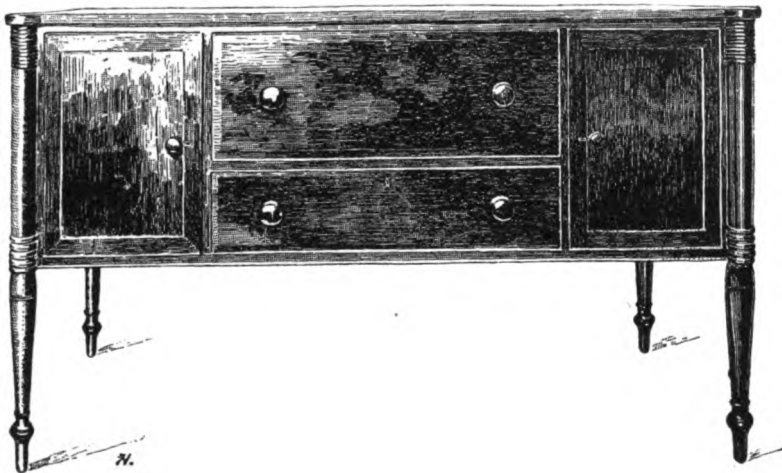
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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

cock and his wife, Lydia, by the same painter, also were upon the walls. In one of the large wings was a fine ball-room.

A sideboard belonging to the above John Hancock is shown on this page. This piece is now in the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. Its date is considerably later than this period.

Another handsome home was that belonging to Edward



MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD

Owned by John Hancock, now by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

Bromfield, a prominent merchant of Boston. According to an authority, the Bromfield House, built in 1722, "was of three stories, and richly furnished according to the fashion of the last century. There were large mirrors in carved mahogany frames with gilt mouldings; and one apartment was hung with tapestry representing a stag hunt. Three steep flights of stone steps ascended from Beacon Street to the front of the mansion; and behind it was a paved courtyard above which rose successive terraces filled with flowers and fruit trees."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

And still another famous mansion was that belonging to the celebrated Sir Charles Henry Frankland, famous for his romance with Agnes Surriage. His Boston house "was built of brick, three stories high and contained in all twenty-six rooms. A spacious hall ran through the centre, from which arose a flight of stairs so broad and easy of ascent that Frankland used to ride his pony up and down with ease and safety. The parlours were ornamented with fluted columns, elaborately carved, and richly gilded pilasters and cornices; the walls were wainscotted and the panels embellished with beautiful landscape scenery; the mantelpieces were of Italian marble and the fireplaces of the finest porcelain, which exhibited views of singular excellence. The floor of the eastern parlours was laid in diamond-shaped figures, and had in the centre a unique and curious tessellated design, consisting, it is said, of more than three hundred kinds of wood, as mahogany, ebony, satinwood, etc., encircling the coat of arms of the Clarke family."

Mrs. Mary Blair died in 1738 with a personalty of £28,232-15-10. Her furniture is elegant and costly. Her Front Lower Room is evidently warmed by two fires, for there are two pairs of dogs, one of brass, the other small with brass heads; the windows are shaded with "blindings," and at night the candles, held in two pairs of elegant sconces and in an old-fashioned standing candlestick, furnish light. There are twelve cane chairs valued at two pounds each, with an expensive couch and squab to match, an oval walnut table, a small tea table, and a clock and case worth £40. In the "bofett" she has quite a collection of china. (See page 353.)

In the Middle Room, we find three tables, oval,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

smaller oak oval, and small mahogany; there are twelve red leather chairs and a "two armed chair;" a looking-glass; a pair of small gilt sconces, a "scrutore for decanters," a "smaller do., with handles," glass candlesticks, and much china.

Five maps hang in the "outer entry," while in the "inner entry" we find a glass lantern, three pictures in



TABLE WITH FALLING LEAVES

Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn. See page 362.

gilt frames, nine large maps, and a pair of leather buckets.

There are four bedrooms. In one is a green silk bed with satin quilt, feather bed and sacking-bottom bedstead, valued at £120; a handsome looking-glass; a dressing-table; ten cane chairs and two elbow cane chairs; and brass hearthware.

"A clouded stuff bed" with chintz quilt lined with silk, cotton counterpane, feather bed, two pillows, bolster and sacking-bottom bedstead, stands in the "Middle Cham-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ber." A chest of drawers with twenty-three pieces of china upon it, a table and dressing-box, seven cane, two leather, two broken and two armed chairs, constitute the other furniture. There are brass andirons, etc., ten pictures in gilt frames, and two portraits of Prince George and Queen Anne in gilt frames.

Two laced beds are in the Front Upper Chamber, which also contains a large Holland tea-table, a chest of drawers, twelve old Turkey-work and four cane chairs, four pictures, a looking-glass, and a pair of large blankets.

In the upper Chamber over the shop, there are a bedstead and bed, a chest of drawers, a Holland table, an old trunk, five other trunks, one of which is sealskin, a second bedstead with sacking-bottom, a looking-glass and thirty-nine dozen bottles.

A tea-table, two folding-boards, and two bass-bottom chairs are in the kitchen. The shop is filled with dry-goods, and Mrs. Blair owns plate valued at £432-15-7½.

Cases with bottles, numbering from six to a dozen, occur very often in the inventories. A handsome liquor case of mahogany, inlaid with satinwood, faces page 370. It is equipped with crystal bottles. This belongs to Mr. Walter Hosmer, Wethersfield, Conn.

When Peter Faneuil succeeded to his uncle's fortune in 1738 and became lord of the sumptuous house on Beacon and Somerset Streets, Boston, he sent almost immediately to Lane and Smithurst, of London, for "a handsome chariot with two sets of harness with the arms as enclosed on the same in the handsomest manner."

The wealthy Boston merchant writes for glass and china and orders "silver spoons and forks with three prongs"; these he wants engraved with the Faneuil arms,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

and says: "Let them be very neat and handsome." He also sends for candlesticks, which he wishes "very neatly made and by the best workmen; let my arms be engraved on each of them and let them be sent me by my brother;" and in order to insure the size of the candlestick, he sends a piece of wax candle as a sample. Another piece of silver that he orders is a punch bowl "to hold from six quarts to two gallons and made after the newest fashion with the family crest on it."

"Six *lignum-vitae* chocolate cups lined with silver" is another order sent to London. At his death these were valued at £3.

Lane and Smithurst soon have another demand, this time for "a copper warming-pan and half a dozen largest and best white blankets for the best chamber, with pudding pans for the kitchen;" and for use in the latter he sends for "the latest best book of the several sorts of cookery, which pray let be of the largest character for the benefit of the maids' reading."

His tablecloths and napkins are made especially for him by John Cossart & Sons of France.

The following letter addressed to John Caswell shows that Faneuil occasionally studied economy even if he was anxious to keep up with the latest European fashions. He writes: "This asks the favour of you when you arrive in London to dispose of a dozen silver knife and fork handles of mine, wch. you have therewith, for my best advantage and procure for me a shogreen case with a dozen of new knives and forks of a handsome silver handle and the best blades you can get made in London, for my own use, with room in the case for a dozen of spoons, the same size and fashion with one sent also by you for a pattern. Pray let the case

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

be the same with that Mr. Baker sent me lined with a red velvet, wch. stands in my dining room. As for the blades of the old knives, I shall be glad to have them made into Oyster Knives, wch. may be easily done, being shortened and ground down."

The furniture of Mr. Faneuil's house was of the most expensive description. One room contained a table at twenty, and twelve carved veneered chairs and a couch at one hundred and five pounds. A large pier-glass with candle-brackets and a chimney glass with the same came to more than £150. The floor was covered with a large Turkey carpet and the hearth was garnished with fine brass dogs, tongs, shovels and bellows.

The next room was furnished with twelve plain walnut-frame, leather-bottom chairs; a mahogany and a marble table; an eight-day walnut-case clock; a copper teatable, eight cups and saucers, teapot stand, bowl and sugar dish; three alabaster stands with bowls; about £200 worth of Delft ware, china and glass; a chimney-glass, a glass sconce with arms and seven others smaller; and brass hearth furnishings. On the walls were "four mezzotinto pieces and one other sort, a prospect of Boston, two landscapes on copper and the Temple of Solomon."

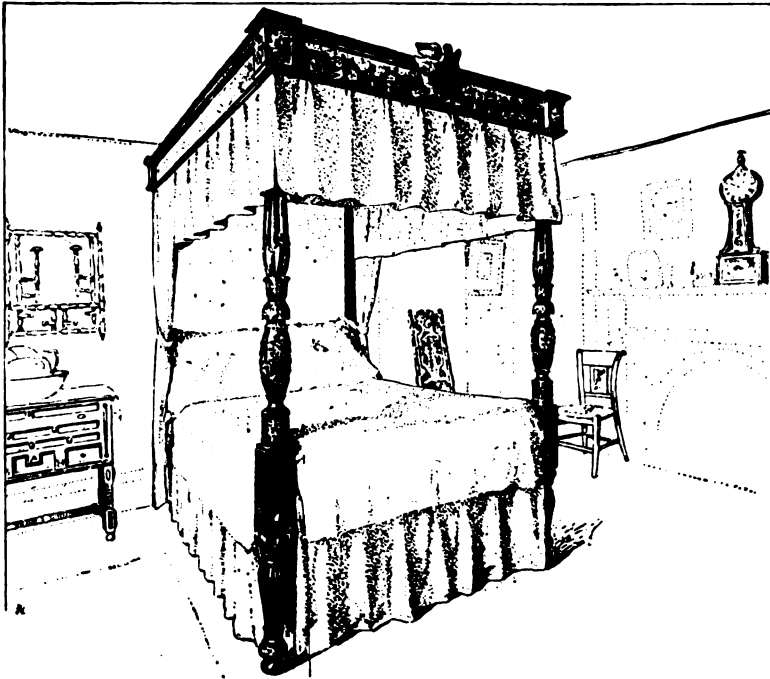
In the entry were twelve fire buckets and a large lantern.

The hall, staircase and other apartments were adorned with about two hundred and fifty pictures, the only subjects mentioned being Alexander's Battles and Erasmus.

Mr. Faneuil's bedroom contained a bedstead with feather bed and mattress, and two green silk quilts. The bed-curtains as well as the window-curtains were of green harrateen. Between the windows was a pier-glass; and a

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

chimney glass and three elaborate sconces with arms gave light and brilliance to the apartment. A Turkey carpet was on the floor, and brass dogs and fire irons garnished the hearth. A bureau-table, twelve chairs and a couch, and a dressing-glass and drawers rendered the room thoroughly



MAHOGANY BEDSTEAD WITH GILT ORNAMENTS  
In the house of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. See page 386.

comfortable. The owner's toilet-set comprised a case with six razors, strop and hone, a pair of scissors, penknife, two bottles and a looking-glass, all silver-mounted. His shaving bason of silver weighed  $27\frac{1}{2}$  oz. and was worth £40-16-0.

Yellow was the prevailing hue of another bedroom. There was a yellow mohair bed with counterpane and cur-



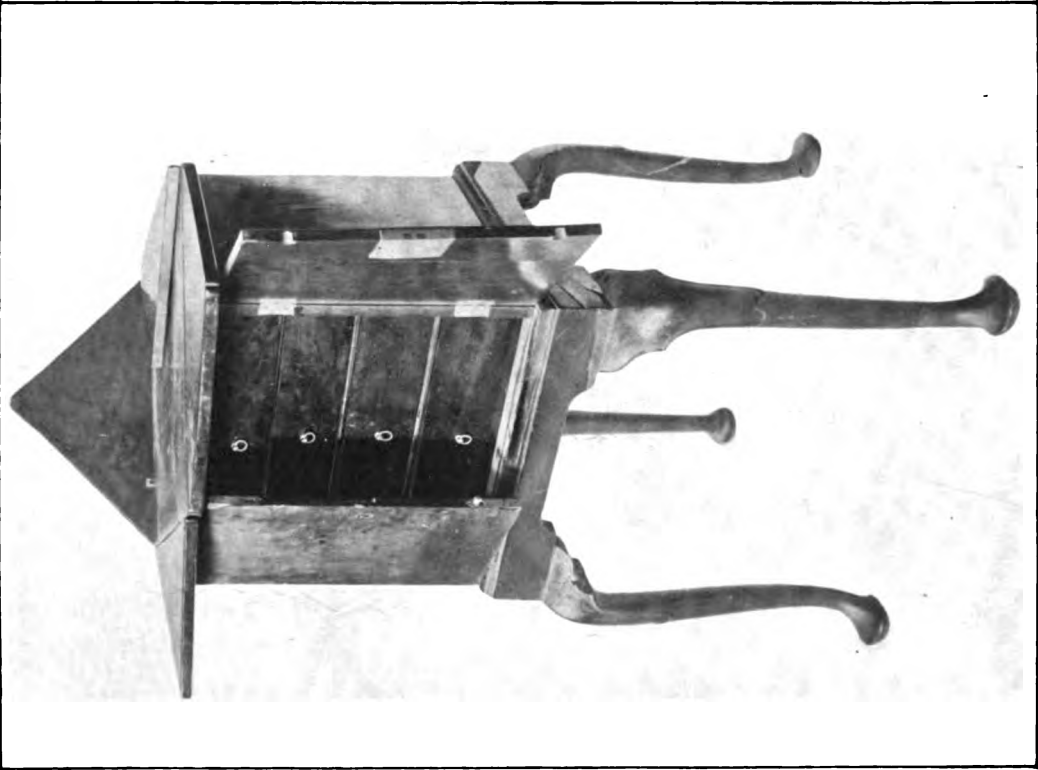
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

tains, six chairs, one great chair, two stools, window-cushions and curtains all of the same material. The other furniture consisted of a fine desk and bookcase with glass doors, dressing-table and glass, chimney-glass and sconces and brass hearthware.

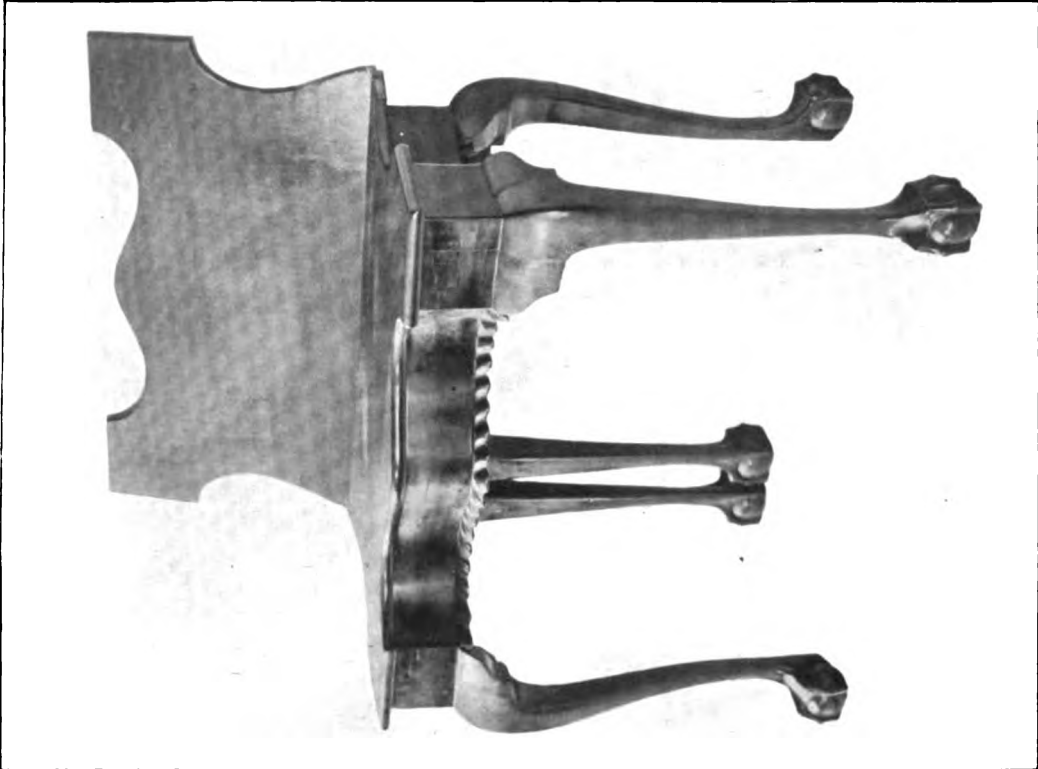
A third bedchamber contained a mahogany bedstead with worked fustian curtains lined with green damask, a Turkey-work and a small leather carpet, six cane chairs and two armchairs, a chamber table, Dutch press (evidently a *kas*), English walnut desk, chimney glass, sconce with arms and brass andirons and fire irons.

A mahogany field-bed with chintz curtains and china window curtains; a mahogany bedstead with blue harrateen bed and window-curtains and silk and purple silk quilts, and a red harrateen bed with material sufficient to complete the window-curtains furnished other rooms in which we also find a Greek screen, marble oval octagon table, twenty-four cane chairs, clothes press, couch, sconces, Turkey-work and other carpets, painted canvas for floors of rooms and entry, and brass chimney-ware in every room. The household linen, some of which as we have seen was made in France, was worth £320; books, £100; and copper and pewter utensils, £181. In the counting-house was a clock, two nests or cases for papers and one for books, a large writing-desk, two leaden standishes, six leather chairs, a small looking-glass, an iron cover for the fire and the usual andirons. He also owned "a parcel of Jewells," valued at £1490-10, and 1400 oz. of plate amounting to £2122-10. When he died in 1742; his estate was valued at £44,451-15-7.

The handsome house, the interior of which we have just described, was a solid square structure, standing in a



**MAHOGANY CASE OF DRAWERS**  
*With folding top. Owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston,  
Mass. See page 368.*



**MAHOGANY CARD TABLE**  
*Owned by Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn.  
See page 389.*

THE  
MAYNARD  
BIBLIOTHECA

1914

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



CHAIR USED BY JOHN ADAMS

Now in the collection of the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass., owned by Mr. Lemon.  
See page 386.

garden of seven acres. This was known as the "Eden of Beauty," where were cultivated hothouse flowers and tropical fruits and some simple and sweet old-fashioned garden flowers imported from France by Andrew Faneuil to awaken memories of his early home.

Mr. Faneuil's beds were particularly handsome, but it

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

was not uncommon to find ornate beds in the homes of the wealthy. On page 383 is represented a highly decorative bedstead, of mahogany, the tester of which is elaborately carved and decorated with gilt. This is in the home of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. Another mahogany bedstead, with ball-and-claw feet, faces page 372. This is owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, and is furnished with old brown hangings in the style of tapestry.

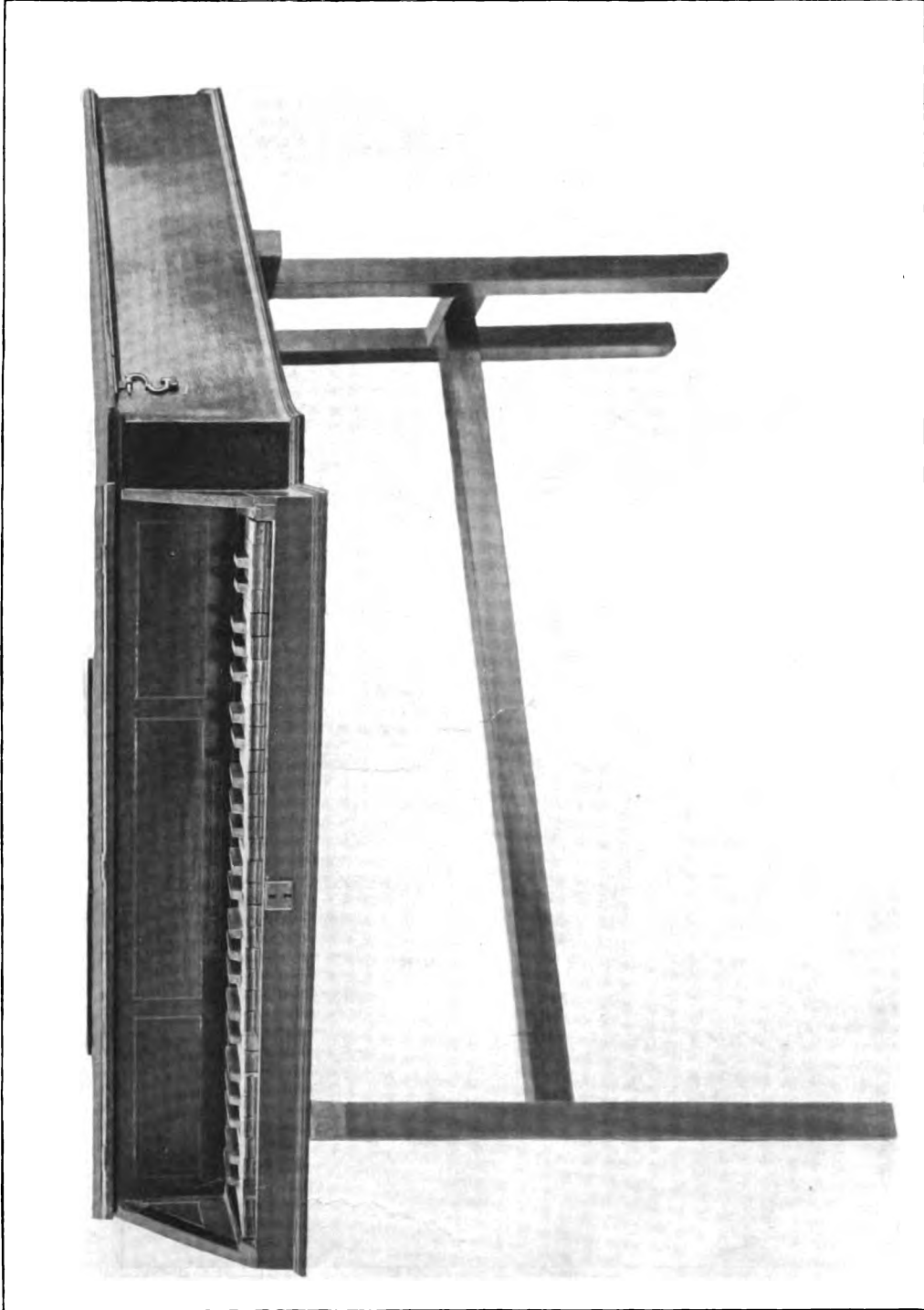
It is singular to find John Adams taking interest in house decorations, yet he notes in his *Diary* (1766):

“Dined at Mr. Nick Boylston’s—an elegant dinner indeed. Went over the house to view his furniture, which alone cost a thousand pounds sterling. A seat it is for a nobleman, a prince. The Turkey carpets, the painted hangings, the rich beds with crimson damask curtains and counterpanes, the beautiful chimney clock, the spacious garden, are the most magnificent of anything I have ever seen.”

A chair that belonged to John Adams appears on page 385. It is of a style derived from the past century and was probably originally covered with cane. This is owned by Mr. Lemon, at the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass.

Still stranger is it to find his kinsman ambitious to have a handsome home. Again John Adams writes in his *Diary* (1772):

“Spent this evening with Mr. Samuel Adams at his house. Had much conversatiou about the state of affairs. Cushing, Phillips, Hancock, Hawley, Gerry, Hutchinson, Sewall, Quincy, etc. Adams was more cool, genteel and agreeable than common; concealed and retained his passions, etc. He affects to despise riches, and not to dread poverty; but no man is more ambitious of entertaining his



**HARPSICHORD**

*Made by Samuel Blythe of Salem. Owned by the Essex Institute, Salem. See page 390.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

friends handsomely, or of making a decent, an elegant appearance than he. He has lately new-covered and glazed his house, and painted it very neatly, and has new papered, painted, and furnished his rooms; so that you visit at a very genteel house, and are very politely received and entertained."

Nathaniel Rogers, of Boston (1770), with an estate of £3,730-17-11, has a typical and comfortable home. Each of the five principal rooms contains an abundance of mahogany. Upon the floor of the East Front Room is a large carpet. Before the fire, burning upon a pair of princess metal andirons, is a two-leaf fire-screen. There are a large mahogany square table (£3), two great mahogany chairs, twenty-four shillings each, and "twelve mahogany Marlboro chairs" (£10-16-0); upon a small square mahogany table (£1-10-0) stands a tea-kettle and lamp, and among the miscellaneous articles was a painted sugar-cannister.

In the West Front Room there was a sofa covered with black horsehair and two squabs worth £8; eight mahogany chairs with crimson damask bottoms worth £11-4-0, a lolling chair lined with leather, a Turkey floor cloth, a mahogany case of drawers valued at £4-10-0; a square four-foot mahogany table, a round mahogany tea-table, a mahogany stand, a pair "prince metal" andirons, steel shovel, tongs, and chimney hooks, a looking-glass with gilt frame, three pictures under glass, and the two blue and white window curtains. There was a great deal of glass and china in this room, including a valuable set of enamelled china; and there were four cases of knives and forks and spoons, three being of shagreen and one of mahogany:

The four-post bedstead, with calico curtains, stands in



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the West Front Chamber, besides which is a "bedside carpet;" an old carpet lies also on the floor. There are six mahogany chairs with hair bottoms (£6), an easy chair and case, a dressing-glass, a chest of drawers, a black walnut desk, and a chest of drawers of the same wood. The curtains at the windows matched those of the bed. Andirons and a small picture completed the furniture of this room.

A four-post mahogany bed and a crimson moreen bed are found in the East Front Chamber. Four copper-plate window curtains soften the light; a small carpet lies on the floor, and another at the entry to the chamber. The rest of the furniture consists of a "buro table," a wash-stand, a dressing-glass, six chairs and a close stool with two arms—all of mahogany.

The bedstead in the Back Chamber is green. The furniture here is somewhat simpler than in the other rooms. The five chairs have straw bottoms; the case of drawers is of pine. There are a small painted pine table, a wicker basket and two carpets.

A four-post bedstead is the chief piece in the Upper Chamber. The Study contains two hundred and eighty-three volumes. There is a book-case here, a small painted chest, a table, a picture painted on board, four small pictures and a map, and a great deal of linen and wearing apparel is kept in this room.

The desk that faces page 376 belonged to James Bowdoin, Governor of Massachusetts in 1785-86. It is simple and must have originally been furnished with brass handles. Upon the flap that lets down is a sharply pointed inlaid star. This piece is owned by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Card-playing was largely indulged in; even the Boston clergy did not despise it. The Rev. Thomas Harward has an early mahogany card-table in 1736. James Jackson has one of the same wood a year earlier. They must have varied greatly in workmanship, for in 1733 John Jekyl has one card-table at twelve shillings, and another of black walnut at £6. The latter costs more than twice as much as either of the mahogany ones above mentioned. They were generally square, but sometimes round and triangular. In 1722, Peter Cutler's shop goods include a round card-table, thirteen shillings. A handsome mahogany card-table with five legs, belonging to Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn., faces page 384. A similar specimen appears on page 309. Cards frequently occur in the inventories. Fifty dozen packs belonged to James Lyndell in 1720. A shilling a pack was the price. They also appear frequently among the advertised importations.

We have seen that music was somewhat cultivated in New England during the seventeenth century. The occasional advertisements of instruments offered at public vendue and special advertisements show that they were constantly imported. For instance, Gilbert Deblois at the Crown and Comb, Queen Street, Boston, has some "good violins, English and German flutes, bows, bridges, pins, and best Roman violin strings, with setts for violoncello" (1756). In 1757 "a beautiful sett of virginals" is offered for sale, and in the next year, "a most curious neat chamber organ in a mahogany case and frame on castors, pipes gilt, with two additional barrels." In 1772 "a neat desk chamber organ" is to be sold "cheap at Mr. McLane's, Watchmaker, on the North side of the Town House."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“A six-string bass viol for a girl with its case” is advertised in Boston, in 1764, together with “hautboys and reeds, fiddles, a tenor violin, fiddle bows, bridges, strings and music-books.” Harpsichords frequently appear, showing that the virginals were giving place to the forerunner of the pianoforte. A harpsichord made by Samuel Blyth of Salem faces page 386. In this instrument each key is set in motion by two wire strings. It is now in the Essex Institute, Salem.

Joiners, turners, carvers, upholsterers, varnishers, clock-makers and cabinet-makers existed in considerable numbers in Boston, and, if carpenters and housewrights are also taken into account, we have a list of some local craftsmen to whose labours a great deal of furniture owed its origin. Most of these were men of small estate, and, at their death, little was found in their shops either in rough timber or cabinet-ware. A partial chronological list of joiners includes Samuel Chough, 1707; Thomas Livermore, 1710; Jacob Fernside, 1716; John Cunnabel, 1724; Thomas Webb, 1728; Peter Gibbons, 1729; Daniel Ballard, 1741; John Stevens, 1745; Edward Wild, 1750; Ebenezer Clough, 1751; and John Adams, 1758. Then we have Edward Budd, 1710, and George Robinson, 1737, carvers; Matthias Smith, turner, 1714; William Howell, 1717, and John Pimm, 1773, cabinetmakers; Benjamin Davis, 1718, and George Burrill, 1721, chair-makers; Thomas Bodeley, clockmaker, 1720; Joseph Hill, varnisher, 1723; William Downe, 1753, and Joseph Gale, 1744, upholsterers.

The close scrutiny kept upon new arrivals by the town authorities was still maintained. In 1717, Joshua Tucker, a turner, and Samuel Gifford, a London upholsterer, ar-



**SIX-LEGGED HIGH CASE OF DRAWERS**

*From the Whipple House, Ipswich, Mass. See page 343.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

rived from England: they were both warned to depart. In 1739, James Murphy, a mariner and joiner, arrived from Newfoundland; and, about the same date, Theophilus Shove received permission to open a shop. On January 2, 1744, "James Atkinson, watchmaker from London, appeared and desired to open a shop in this town which is here granted, he having brought with him upwards of £500 sterling and being a gentleman of a good character." Character and means were, therefore, the qualifications for admission.

By far the majority of joiners and cabinet-makers kept no stock in trade; theirs was all bespoke work. Even the rich shopkeepers rarely had any cabinet-ware in stock. Abraham Francis, who died in 1720, worth £2,658-12-0, may be selected as a fair example. His warehouse contained no furniture for sale, except two new chests of drawers valued at £15.

William Howell was capable of doing the finer kinds of cabinet work, but his estate amounted to no more than £73-5-10, and the only evidence of work among his possessions consisted of walnut veneer, £8-18-7; a leaf of a tea-table, £0-7-6; a clock and head-case, £17-6-3; and twelve pillars for a chest of drawers, £0-9-0. An entry in Samuel Sewall's diary reads; "August 3, 1714. John Cunable takes measure for a window in my wife's Bed-Chamber to the North-east, because of so many buildings darkening us to the South-west. August 4th, Howell, the Cabinet-maker, takes down the closet that stands in the corner to make way for the window." We have already seen that the joiners and cabinet-makers of the day were also glaziers, and the above extract shows that labour was not specialized in these various branches.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The native joiners were evidently still making furniture with the old black applied ornaments and black knob-handles. Howell's "twelve pillars" were probably of this nature, and in that case their relatively high price warrants the supposition that they may have been of ebony. It is plain that the use of brass, instead of black wood for relief and contrast of colour, was not the rule yet in the ordinary home, since that metal often receives special mention when it occurs. Thus, in 1710, the appraiser notes a "chest of drawers with brasses, £4-10-0," belonging to Elisha Webb of Charlestown.

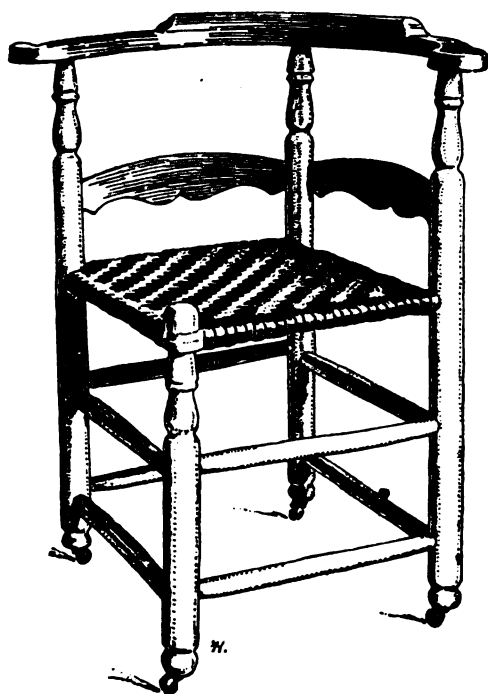
The widow of Sir William Phipps married Peter Sergeant, Esq., who died in 1714. The latter seems to have been engaged in some branch of this business. His personalty included fifty red cedar boards, 3,290 feet of diamond-cut glass, 600 feet squares, a large beam and an ebony post. The latter was valued at ten shillings, and its presence shows that it was possible to use real ebony in the applied ornaments and inlays of the old styles of furniture that the new had not yet entirely supplanted.

The corner chair, painted white with mat bottom, shown on page 393 and belonging to the Worcester Society of Antiquity, was originally the property of Benjamin Vassal, and may have been made by him, for he was a cabinet-maker by trade. He was born in 1742 and died in 1828. At the beginning of the Revolution, he took up arms and served in the American army until the close of the war. He became first lieutenant. In 1780 he lived in Charlton, and in 1817 in Oxford, Mass. It is thought that he was a native of Scituate, Mass.

During the first half of the century, it will have been noticed that the set of cane or other chairs in the dining-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

room or parlour is nearly always accompanied by the "couch and squab." The settee also assumes prominence with the advent of mahogany. Fine examples of the latter will be reproduced in the Chippendale chapter. A quaint settee with openwork back in the Chinese taste, of native make,



CORNER CHAIR

Made by Benjamin Vassall. Now owned by the Worcester Society of Antiquity, Worcester, Mass. See page 392.

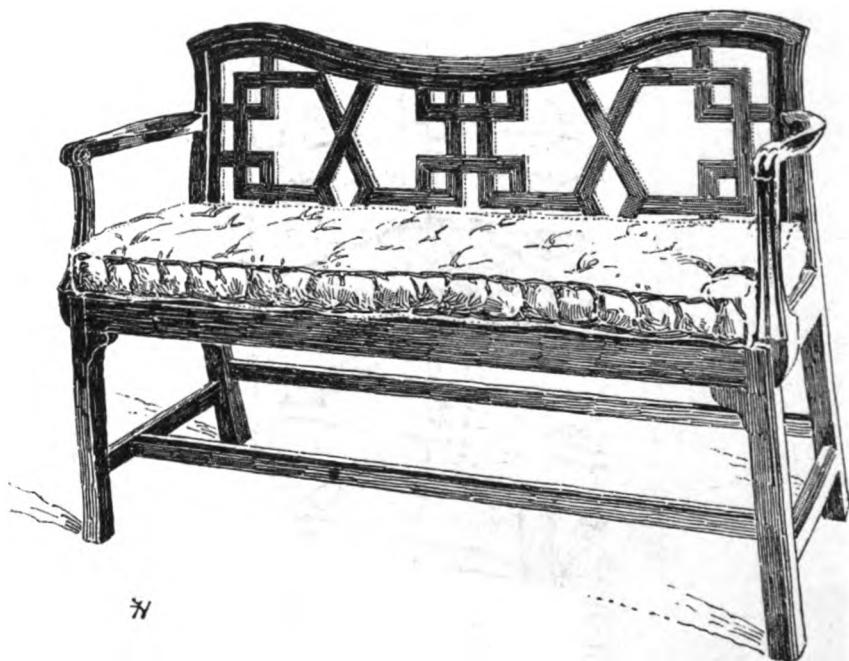
is given on page 394. It was originally in the Brattle Street Church, Boston, and is now owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

The chairs made by the native chair-makers were principally of the cheaper kinds. The only material owned by George Burrill (1721) was about seven pounds' worth of "timber and flags."



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Peter Gibbon (1729) has a "chest of drawers not finished" in his shop, but nothing else. Edward Weld's shop (1751) contained only two boxes, a writing-desk, two bedsteads, a frame of a table and a frame of a case of drawers. These totalled only sixteen shillings in all. In the shop chamber there was some walnut and pine timber, and



SETTEE FROM THE BRATTLE STREET CHURCH, BOSTON  
Now owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. See page 393.

some refuse boards. Daniel Ballard (1741), whose estate amounted to nearly £1,500, had a large stock of upholstery goods worth £380, and almost £100 worth of boards, mouldings, panels, etc., but no cabinet work finished or in course of construction.

The upholsterers sometimes had chairs, sofas and beds for sale. Thomas Baxter's stock (1751) included various stuffs used for coverings, webbing, bed-ticks, couch-bot-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

toms, suits of curtains, braid and binding, tassels and fringe, blankets, counterpanes and coverlids. One suit of harra-teen curtains came to £42; £25 is also set down to wood-work for a bed. This is so far above the average price of bedsteads that this one must have been richly carved. As a rule, about ninety per cent. of the cost of a bed is due to



CHERRY CHEST OF DRAWERS

Owned by Thompson S. Grant, Esq., Enfield, Conn. See page 337.

the feather bedding and hangings and coverings. Twenty-nine chairs, worth £80-10-0, are also among Mr. Baxter's goods. These again are unusually expensive.

Black walnut was the favourite wood for chair frames until quite late in our period, and mahogany never entirely supplanted it. The carved frames of all the new designs as they arose were executed in this timber and they were upholstered with almost an infinite variety of materials.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The walnut frames were more frequently seated with leather and fine cane than with anything else all through this period. Walnut backs with rush bottoms occur, and these are by no means cheap. The Turkey-work chair lasts till surprisingly late.

The above kinds were all made by native workers.



CORNER CHAIR OWNED BY DANIEL BLISS (1756) AND TWO CHAIRS MADE BY JOSEPH HOSMER (CABINET-MAKERS)  
Owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord. See page 398.

Although no mahogany furniture appears in the shops of any of the above named makers, we know that they used that wood to some extent. Among other evidence on this point is an advertisement in 1741 that a parcel of mahogany planks is to be sold by Nathaniel Cunningham at Belcher's Wharf; and Robert Stidman's goods (1751) include 859 feet of mahogany. This was valued at the high figure of five shillings and sixpence per foot. Such sales were frequent in New York at this period (see page 285).

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



MAPLE CHEST-UPON-CHEST OF DRAWERS

From the Bannister family; now owned by the Newburyport Historical Society, Newburyport, Mass. See page 398.

About that date, maple begins to be employed much more frequently in native work than hitherto. Some of the maple furniture recorded between 1740 and 1770 comprises tables, bedsteads, desks and bookcases, round chairs, chest of drawers and table, round tea-table, couch, and chairs with flag and leather bottoms. Generally the maple furniture is cheaper than the black walnut, but sometimes

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

carving rendered it expensive. In 1749, one set of six chairs with flag bottoms amounts to twelve pounds. In 1762, nine with rush bottoms cost only a shilling each. Cherry is quite scarce; in 1749 Mr. Nathaniel Martyn owns a desk of that wood that is appraised at fifteen pounds. Birch is occasionally met with. Six black birch chairs come to eight pounds in 1751.

A chest-upon-chest of maple appears on page 397. The bottom chest has a swell front, and the legs are slightly *bombé*. This piece belonged to the Bannister family and is now in the rooms of the Newburyport Historical Society. It is probably of native workmanship, as is the six-legged case of drawers facing page 390.

It is somewhat remarkable that none of the native makers whose names we have cited should have advertised in the papers as their brethren in New York did. The furniture that is advertised either comes under the hammer at the decease or departure of the owner, or else has lately been imported. The importations after 1750 largely increased. In October, 1767, at a public meeting in Faneuil Hall, it was declared that "the excessive use of Foreign Superfluities is the chief cause of the distressed state of this town;" means were to be taken to lessen the use of a list of imports including household furniture, clocks and watches.

Two chairs made by a native cabinet-maker, Joseph Hosmer, are represented on page 396 with a corner chair that belonged to Daniel Bliss (1756). These two rush-bottom chairs differ greatly in the shape and ornamentation of their backs. Another chair, a Windsor, of the kind called "comb back," facing page 370 was made in all probability by a local workman. It was used by Ezra

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

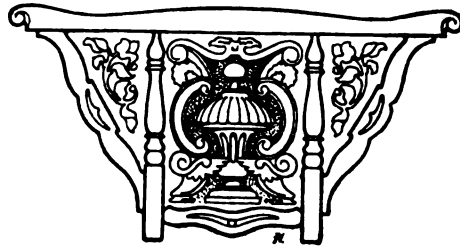
Ripley as a writing-chair and subsequently by Nathaniel Hawthorne. All four of these specimens are owned by the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord.

Besides the best timber, all the mounts and fittings necessary for the production of the most fashionable cabinet-ware of the day were on sale in the shops of the native braziers. One of the latter was Jonathan Jackson, who left an estate of more than eight thousand pounds sterling in 1736. Besides desk and chest hinges and locks, his supplies for local cabinet-makers included one hundred and twenty-three dozen drops that varied in cost from eight and a half to thirteen and a half pence per dozen. The brass escutcheons that accompanied them varied from nine to twenty-three pence per dozen. There were also twenty dozen brass handles from twenty-seven to thirty-four pence per dozen. The handles thus cost twice as much as the drops. Among this brazier's native wares, it is noticeable that there are no brass furniture fittings. The prices are given in sterling money which, at that date, was six times the value of old tenor. Mr. Jackson's widow, Mary, and son, William, kept on the business. In 1756, they live at the Brazen Head, in Cornhill, and advertise the following importations from London and Bristol: "All sorts of hardware, door locks and hinges, desk and bookcase furniture, viz., handles and escutcheons of various sorts, desk and bookcase locks, desk buttons, clock case hinges, furniture for tea chests, brass and iron table ketches, London glue, brass and iron desk hinges."

Two years later, Edward Jackson, another member of the family, also a brazier, died worth nearly six thousand pounds. Included in his stock were neat polished brass handles at three shillings, and suitable escutcheons at eighteen

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

pence per dozen; about one-hundred-and-seventy thousand Rosehead nails for chairs; eighty-four dozen solid drops and half as many escutcheons; other brass handles and "bright" and brass desk hinges. The brazier's trade seems to have been very profitable, for we find another widow, Mrs. Sarah Dolbear, who carried on her husband's business, and died worth £30,000. The shop contained hollow brass ring drops, and solid drops with wires; brass escutcheons, common brass handles (worth slightly more than the sold drop); complete sets of desk and bookcase furnishings; iron desk locks and hinges; and brass chair nails with long shanks, at four shillings per thousand. Some of the desk and bookcase mounts cost ten shillings, and others £1 per set. From this we gather that the old "drops" were being supplanted in public favour by handles of new designs, and that the conventional Tudor rose, that has been such a favourite decorative feature in the old carved oak, was now repeated in brass along the edges of the chair seats.



THE  
FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS



PART VI  
CHIPPENDALE  
AND OTHER GREAT CABINET-MAKERS OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
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**CARVED EBONY CABINET**

*Owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithtown, L. I. See page 416.*



THE FURNITURE  
OF OUR  
FOREFATHERS

By ESTHER SINGLETON

WITH CRITICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PLATES  
By RUSSELL STURGIS

ILLUSTRATED

PART VI

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WITH CRITICAL NOTES ON MANY OF  
THE PLATES BY RUSSELL STURGIS

ALL THE NOTES FURNISHED BY MR. STURGIS  
ARE FOLLOWED BY HIS SIGNATURE.

PAGE

FRONTISPIECE: CARVED EBONY CABINET FACING 401

This massive piece of carved ebony was brought from China and is part of a magnificent collection of Chinese furniture that was got together by Mr. Caleb T. Smith during his residence at Canton from 1850 to 1870. Every piece came from the house of some mandarin of high rank. The present piece belonged to one Houqua. The other pieces comprise a large round centre table, two sofas, two armchairs, six high-back chairs, two high stands with antique bronzes, two low stands and various other articles. When the owner wanted certain repairs made upon arrival, he was told by experienced American cabinet-makers that there were no instruments manufactured of fine enough steel and temper here to work such wood, which is like stone. The form of this piece of furniture is curiously interesting in that it generically resembles the *dressoirs* and livery cupboards of the seventeenth century. The china displayed upon the shelves is of the very choicest varieties, and was brought in at the same time. E. S.

BOULLE TABLE . . . . . FACING 403

Boule table, the inlay of tortoise-shell and of brass or a metallic alloy resembling German silver, and a richly coloured stained veneer of wood. The elaborateness of the veneering is completed by very rich gilded bronze appliques, those at the heads of the four legs being of peculiar richness. It is probable that an examination of these pieces would show the stamp of some well-known worker in bronze of the reign of Louis XIV. R. Sturgis.

BOULLE SECRETARY AND CABINET . . . . . FACING 406

Writing-desk with cabinet above, of which, however, the uppermost member is missing. This elaborate piece of furniture is inlaid in the style of that Boule work with tortoise-shell and metal which makes one of the glories of the reign of Louis XIV. The work before us is of a date difficult to fix as the appliques seem to be hardly of the same date as the very beautiful and delicate scrollwork of the inlays. R. Sturgis.

BOULLE CABINET . . . . . FACING 408

Cabinet with richly carved open stand, the body containing ten small drawers and a central cabinet opening with doors, and a gallery of unusual height and prominence. This piece is in many ways unusual in design, for, although the separate parts are familiar, their combination is surprising and yet agreeably so, for the general proportions are extremely good. There is no Boule work properly so-called in the piece before us, but the rounded table-like masses which adorn the fronts of the drawers and the panels of the doors would be insufferable in polished wood, while in the delicate translucent and richly veined material, tortoise-shell, they are in a sense attractive and form a useful centre for the elaborate sculpture around them. The colonnettes are sheathed with a veneer of tortoise-shell. The elaborate carving in light material, and the rippled pattern of the mouldings which form the frame

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enclosing each panel, whether forming the front of the drawer or the surface of the door, are of earlier date than this use of tortoise-shell would suggest. There is something about the general design also which suggests a seventeenth-century piece. In fact, if this chest of drawers and cupboards dates from a time later than the reign of Louis XIV. (1715) it is assuredly the work of a cabinet-maker with strong traditional tendencies and one who longed to retain the designs of his boyhood. In a piece less elaborate and costly the student would be inclined to note the probability of its having been made somewhere in the provinces, far away from Paris; for it is well known that the style of design and of carving would be retained long in the south in Brittany or in Burgundy after it had changed seriously at the centre. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY CHAIR . . . . . 409

Mahogany chair of which the back has a single broad slat pierced in suggestion of scroll-work with just so much reference to the broken and interrupted scrolls of the rococo style as would be attractive in an epoch which had not yet forgotten the illogical brilliancy of that class of work. The rococo was pretty nearly abandoned in France as early as 1760, but it might easily have lingered in England, from whence this chair was undoubtedly brought, twenty-five years longer; it is therefore not remarkable to see these lingering traces of its passage. The front legs are of perfectly well-managed curves with claw-and-ball feet. It is interesting to see the great added weight and solidity given to the wood where it is most elaborately cut away into supposedly graceful shapes. R. Sturgis.

## CHAIR . . . . . 413

This chair is to be compared with the one shown on page 409 as being almost precisely similar in the character of its back, while the front legs are as square and plain as the others were elaborate. Moreover, there is reason for square and solid legs; there are stretching-pieces which connect the four legs with one another and make the whole piece very solid. It is easy to see that the demand for as obviously durable and massive a piece as this would be contemporary with the demand for the more graceful and finished type shown in the former example. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY CHAIRS . . . . . 414

Two chairs, in the form of which the two different types shown on pages 409 and 413, are reproduced.

It will be understood that in all these chairs the seat is separate; usually a plank with a stuffed cushion secured to it, the plank forming the under side of the cushion. A somewhat later arrangement is the substitution for the solid panel of an open frame with strips of webbing carried from side to side. This, when introduced, was found to give the cushion greater softness and to produce a more agreeable seat.

In all these inserted cushions there is a certain air of fitness, the soft part of the chair obviously separate from the frame and easily movable. It is, in taste and propriety, a fashion superior to that in which the cushion is nailed fast to the outside of the frame. R. Sturgis.

## CARVED EBONY CHAIRS AND TABLE . . . . . FACING 416

These pieces come from the same collection as that on the frontispiece. The form of the chairs is very much like some of those of the Queen Anne period and shows the origin of the models of that date. The magnificently carved ball-and-claw foot table is as ornate as any similar pattern of the Chippendale school. The chairs are stuffed and covered with dark blue satin with woven Oriental figure and landscape subjects in various colours. E. S.

## MAHOGANY CHAIRS . . . . . 417

Two mahogany armchairs, the style of which is closely in accordance with that of the chair page 409 and one of the two page 414. The intelligence of the designs which we associate with Chippendale and his immediate successors in English furniture-making is hardly to be appreciated until one notes the perfect fitness of those designs to the enlarged form required by an armchair. It is hard to say whether the smaller or the larger piece of furniture is the more effective; and yet the design cannot be said to have undergone notable modification. R. Sturgis.

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| <b>MAHOGANY CHAIR</b> . . . . .  | 420        |
| <p>A chair of the same epoch as the pieces represented on previous pages, but modified by pierced patterns in the stretching-pieces which are made of thin boards for the purpose of receiving this kind of ornamentation. The same patterns are reproduced in mere sinkings in the front legs. The design of the piece is not improved by these ornaments. It is an experience constantly recurring in the examination of styles of art—the attempts of workmen to escape from the uniformity of design observed in the more important works of the time. Once in a thousand instances the innovation succeeds, and a new style succeeds to the old one after existing for a while contemporaneously with it. R. Sturgis.</p>                                     |            |
| <b>CHIPPENDALE CHAIR</b> . . . . .   | 423        |
| <p>Chair in which the forms given on page 413 and page 420 are repeated with but slight alteration while, however, the prominent surfaces of the woodwork are covered with the most delicate sculpture in low relief. The front of the chair, legs and rail, is so beautifully wrought, with such good taste as well as ingenuity, that one cannot but regret that the eighteenth century seldom attempted such refined sculpture in buildings or in furniture of greater size and pretension. R. Sturgis.</p>   |            |
| <b>SET OF LACQUER TABLES AND CARVED EBONY CHAIR</b> . . . . .  | FACING 424 |
| <p>These pieces belong to the same collection as that in the frontispiece and those facing page 416. The form of the chair with cabriole legs, claw feet and carved heads terminating the arms is one that frequently occurs in English furniture of the eighteenth century. It is upholstered in crimson satin. On the lacquer tables is a large bowl of the rarest porcelain along the rim of which is a border divided into symmetrical lengths, each containing a different picture. E. S.</p>   |            |
| <b>MAHOGANY CHAIRS</b> . . . . .   | 427        |
| <p>Chair and armchair of mahogany forming part of the same set, though the coverings of the seat are now different. What was said above in connection with the cut on page 417 applies with force to these two pieces. The entire fitness of the design to both forms is especially worthy of note. R. Sturgis.</p>  |            |
| <b>ARMCHAIR AND TWO SHERATON CHAIRS</b> . . . . .  | 429        |
| <p>Armchair which in all respects resembles those shown in previous illustrations of this Part. Two chairs of different patterns and of somewhat later date than the pieces found on the pages above. The designs resemble those shown in Sheraton's "drawing-book," which is indeed of a later date than the Chippendale contributions to decorative art. R. Sturgis.</p>   |            |
| <b>"CHINESE" SETTEE</b> . . . . .  | FACING 430 |
| <p>This handsome settee is an excellent example of the "Chinese" style of Chippendale work which is fully discussed in the text. The frame is of mahogany, handsomely carved, and the seat is cane, in accordance with Chippendale's instructions. Probably this was originally intended for a summer-house, the suggestions of umbrellas in the top and temple bells in the hanging ornaments occurring often in the furniture designed for garden pavilions, etc. There are several armchairs of identical design belonging to this set. E. S.</p>   |            |
| <b>CHIPPENDALE BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY</b> . . . . .  | FACING 432 |
| <p>Library bookcase, the lower part containing fifteen drawers, in addition to the usual writing-desk with dropping shelf and the fittings of the scrutoir; while the upper part has the usual distribution of glass doors with light wooden sash-bars. It is probable that the upper part, if not the lower, is separable into three pieces for convenience of transportation, and undoubtedly the whole uppermost member—the cornice, as we call it in recent times—can be removed, as it is nothing but a simulacrum, representing no essential part of the piece of furniture. This piece of about 1810, though with certain minor details which suggest an earlier time, is most attractive for its simplicity, the general grace of its proportions, and</p> |            |

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the evident air of being a thoroughly workmanlike and most useful piece of furniture for the library. The more precious or more delicately bound books even of a large collection would find room behind those glass doors, and the small prints, the notes and documents even of a busy literary student might find room in these numerous drawers. R. Sturgis.

## CHIPPENDALE CHAIR AND HEPPELWHITE CARD- TABLE . . . . . 433

Round table of most successful and admirable design, a gem of simplicity and refinement. The inlays in light-coloured wood are almost characteristic of Heppelwhite. The chairs shown on pages 413 and 423 appeal perhaps more strongly to the sense of admiration for stately designs than the present one—they may be thought more fit for a splendidly-furnished drawing-room. There is in the nature of the design nothing to put this one into a place of inferiority. R. Sturgis.

## SETTEE . . . . . FACING 434

Double-chair of carved walnut, a piece to be compared with that in the lower part of the Plate opposite page 448; in connection with which there is given some statement of the different meanings of the word settee often applied to such pieces as this. In the present case the carving is of unusual interest. It is rare that mascarons are introduced into work of this epoch (about 1780), and still more rare that the end of a member should be carved into an elaborate head, as seen in the arms of the present sofa. These dragon-heads are evidently studied from Oriental, probably Chinese, originals, but the heads from which the mascarons of the sofa legs were taken were of European character, however remote and impossible to trace may be their primal origin. The forms of this piece are those of the famous Chippendale, but the carving is, to say the least, unusual in work of his, and it seems not impossible that an American joiner with Chippendale's book before him should have produced such a piece. R. Sturgis.

## CHIPPENDALE AND SHERATON CHAIRS . . . . . 435

The two central chairs are of Chippendale design; the one to the extreme right is a Sheraton with the lyre-shaped open panel; the chair to the extreme left belongs to the early nineteenth century. These are sufficiently described in the text. E. S.

## WRITING-CABINET AND TWO TABLES . . . . . FACING 438

Small case of drawers with writing-desk decorated with carving and with the original brass handles. This piece of the closing years of the eighteenth century is somewhat unusual in its small size and in the curious repetition on a small scale of the parts of a two-bodied piece—a chest upon chest or *bahut à deux corps*. The whole piece stands but little higher than the modern writing-desk, and yet, in the small space allowed there are three drawers, of which the lowermost is raised above the floor by the whole height of the supporting feet.

The two stands with deep tops are interesting as unusually rich examples of the table with rim. The square table has this raised rim so pierced and of such comparative height that although it is not vertical, not at right angles with the top, it may with propriety be called a gallery. This, of course, has been added to the top, and fitted on with careful dowelling and glue. The other stand has the rim worked out of the solid precisely in the same way that the carving in the middle has been done, the whole top being either a single piece of wood, or else built up by the setting edge to edge of different pieces of plank made one by the well-known arts of the joiner. The tripod stands and pedestals are very beautifully designed and prettily carved. R. Sturgis.

## DOUBLE CORNER CHAIR . . . . . 439

Elaborate corner chair so designed that it presents an equally decorative aspect on every side; unusual in this and still more unusual in having the secondary or upper back, which may perhaps be an after thought or perhaps a special provision made for one who desired support for the head. The complicated form has not been mastered by the designer. Its essential clumsiness has not been overcome; but the beauty of the workmanship, and the delicacy of the design shown in the turned uprights and stretching-pieces and in the carefully modelled and carved legs, give this armchair a high place as a piece of decorative art. R. Sturgis.

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### MAHOGANY TABLE AND TEA-KETTLE STANDS

FACING 440

Two mahogany pedestal tables, and a stand with "gallery" enclosing the top. All three of these pieces are of the pedestal type, the upright pillar being supported by a tripod of three gracefully shaped legs. The beauty and the long continued permanence of this type of support is commented on in connection with the illustrations of Part V. The designers of the time, having this entirely satisfactory principle to go upon, were never tired of working out the possible varieties of form and carved detail. Thus, the table on the left depends entirely on turning for the decoration of the pedestal, and the three legs are cut out of thin board and are simply rounded at top and bottom; the outlines remaining, however, extremely graceful and appropriate; while the stand with a little pierced railing around the top has the pedestal elaborately fluted above and reeded in spiral form below, with the three legs carved with a graceful adaptation of acanthus leafage. The larger table in the middle has a carved coat-of-arms which, however, lacks the crest. R. Sturgis.

### CHAIR . . . . . 444

A chair of later design than those shown on pages 409, 413 *et seq.* As mere matter of composition, this is in no respect an advance upon the earlier pieces, but there is an increased delicacy in the parts of the back, partly real and resulting from their slenderness, and partly apparent, coming from their very delicate moulding. The plain square legs are moulded and the mouldings cut across into little pyramids like mediæval dog-teeth, an attractive treatment when more elaborate carving cannot be had. R. Sturgis.

### MAHOGANY CHAIR . . . . . 447

This chair is one of a set that was probably made about the middle of the eighteenth century. It may have been made by a Charleston cabinet-maker; it is almost identical with another chair on page 148, which also comes from Charleston. This piece is upholstered with dark red leather fixed with brass studs. E. S.

### CHIPPENDALE STANDS . . . . . FACING 448

Three pieces ascribed to Chippendale, namely, tall stand with open "gallery" around the top and pierced and carved uprights; low stand with raised moulded edge worked in the solid; and closed case possibly for keeping music. Such pieces as the taller of these stands were often called candle-stands; that eighteenth-century term curiously repeating the proper and original sense of the Latin word *candelabrum*; for those who have studied in modern museums will remember the ponderous and richly carved marble pieces five feet high, as well as the slender bronze uprights of the same or even greater altitude, which were used simply to support the feeble lamps of the Roman Imperial time. The small flame of a candle or lamp is doubled in efficacy by being set rather high in a place, where the unceiled walls and the low ceiling receive and reflect the full force of its illumination. Such a stand as the present, about three feet six inches high, would serve rather as a piece to hold the light by which one would wish to read, for a candle set upon it would be at the right height for a seated reader. The low stand, perhaps two feet in height, is a piece useful in a thousand ways. In connection with the plates of Part V, there is comment on the tripod feet and the solid moulded edges of such pieces. R. Sturgis.

### SETTEE . . . . . FACING 448

Double-chair sofa of Chippendale style, with an unusual amount of sculpture added. Such pieces were called at the time simply "double chairs," and if the term settee was also applied to them, that word was used equally for other very different pieces, or parts of pieces. Thus (and this is an interesting point) the word settee was used for the small three-cornered seats worked into the two ends of very long sofas, such as were made for the great *salons* of France, and sometimes imitated in England. These pieces were like a sofa to which two corner chairs had been added, one at each of the two ends, the whole worked into one design which was sometimes very spirited and successful; and the whole was then called, in England, a sofa with settees. The present writer has heard the name applied in old country houses to the settles set upon rockers—pieces like a rocking-chair made for two or three occupants. Out-of-door garden seats long enough for two, and settles of the true

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antique fireside pattern, are called by that name. In fact, anything which can be used for sitting upon and which is not a chair in the ordinary sense of the word, may, it appears, be called a settee.

The present piece is unusual in that while the forms are rather simple, there is an unusual amount of naturalistic carving worked upon the front face of each bar or separate piece which goes to make up the back. R. Sturgis.

**MIRRORS . . . . . FACING 450**

These mirrors are of various dates, ranging from early in the century till the close of the Chippendale period. The top one on the right, showing the bird at the top, is a good example of the spikiness of the characteristic Chippendale carving. The rest are comparatively simple in design and workmanship, and were to be found in homes that were not necessarily luxurious. E. S.

**SCREEN, TABLE AND CHAIR . . . . . 451**

The screen is a beautifully embroidered floral design, and is an excellent specimen of the more elaborate needlework done by the ladies of the eighteenth century. It should be compared with the screen, worked in 1776, shown on page 311. The claw-and-ball tripod table is a common form of the middle of the century, and the chair is one of the more graceful models designed by Heppelwhite. It is stuffed, and covered with crimson damask. This is the chair that Heppelwhite designates as "cabriole." E. S.

**FIELD-BED . . . . . 454**

Four-post bedstead with low and slender posts carrying the skeleton of an elaborate canopy or ciel. The idea is that as the posts are short, the tester shall be arched up high in the middle. This piece as compared with the massive and rich four-posters of Part V is curious in this, that the posts of the head-board are of precisely the same design as those of the foot, except that the latter have a single passage of reeding in the most prominent part. R. Sturgis.

**BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY . . . . . FACING 454**

Bookcase and scrutoir with drawers below, the glass of the doors lined with some textile material, the bookcase so much less deep than the lower part of the case that a broad shelf is provided in front of the bookcase doors. The writing-shelf is the inside of the dropping front cover which, when closed, completes the design of the piece. The suggestion of Gothic window tracery in the form of the sash bars seems to imply an epoch of about 1820, although in Sheraton's dated designs of 1812 some approach to it may be found. In England, where the practice of what was thought to be Gothic art has never been abandoned altogether, such a way of treating the slender bars of glazed sash may have occurred to the designer at almost any time. R. Sturgis.

**CHAIRS . . . . . 457**

Chair and armchair of the type characteristic of drawing-room furniture in the time of George III. and George IV. The suggestion of the form is evidently classical, taken from the Greco-Roman forms studied by the French artists of the First Empire. Indeed, the forms of these English chairs are closely akin to those in use within Napoleon's sphere of influence. The design has in it a certain grave respectability appropriate enough to the rooms of English citizens of the wealthier class at a time when decorative art was at the very lowest ebb which it has ever reached in western Europe since the revival of art in the tenth century. R. Sturgis.

**INLAID SIDEBOARD . . . . . FACING 458**

Small sideboard with three knife-cases. This sideboard is of very unusual character in that it is arranged as if for travel or for easy removal from place to place. That which appears in the picture as the back of the sideboard and supports four shelves, each having a bracket to support it, is in reality the hinged cover which on occasion can be shut down upon the box below. The shelves are all adjustable themselves to the raised upper part or cover

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and are hinged as are their brackets, these last having spring holders which keep them in place when they are once opened. The side shelves drop like the leaves of a Pembroke table and are supported, when raised, by sliding strips which disappear in the body of the piece. The whole thing is inlaid with delicate woods much in the style of Heppelwhite, but with more use of floral ornament than is usual with him.

The knife-cases are of unusually elaborate design, this richness of aspect being caused mainly by the very finely wrought metal mountings. There are three delicate little feet to each piece and the attachment of these to the body, the striking plates of the drop handles on the sides and of the sloping top, and most of all, the scutcheon and hasp piece of the lock are remarkable pieces of delicate work. One looks in vain among these rich and fantastic scrolls for a cipher or even a single initial. All is abstract and made without reference to any particular owner—something unusual in pieces of such varied beauty. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY CHAIR . . . . . 461

Chair with legs and cross bars as plain as any that we have to do with in this study, but with a back elaborately wrought as if in further development of the style adopted in the chairs shown on pages 409, 413, and elsewhere. The design of the present chair may be thought even more constructional than those in that it is more obviously made of slender bars wrought into shape instead of a broad pierced slat. R. Sturgis.

## ADAM CHAIRS . . . . . 463

Chairs and armchair, the two pieces on the left and in the middle having much the same Imperial character as those on page 457. R. Sturgis.

## HEPPELWHITE CHAIR . . . . . 465

Chair which should be compared with that on page 461. There is the same desire to obtain curved forms in the back, and to give the combination of these a shape which reminds one of the outline of a shield. The mediæval pointed *é. u.* has always been attractive to moderns, and wherever an excuse offers to bring it in, as in the scutcheon of a key-hole, the flat plate of a sconce, or as here, the mere bounding outline of a series of bars, it is seized upon eagerly and retained entire. The legs of this chair are prettily inlaid with light-coloured wood. R. Sturgis.

## HEPPELWHITE SOFA . . . . . FACING 466

Sofa of about 1780, with no woodwork showing except the legs. Such pieces as this, which are the precursors of our modern stuffed and tufted furniture, of horsehair and springs, were not themselves so very luxurious. They were comparatively hard, and, however well stuffed were the seat, back and arms, they hardly invited to such reposeful attitudes as the nineteenth-century pieces which correspond to them. On the other hand, they were far more comely in the room, agreeing much better with the architectural lines, retaining a certain severity and dignity, and avoiding the appearance which our modern comfortable furniture almost inevitably has, of being an accidental cushion thrown down here or there, and not belonging to the apartment which it is supposed to complete. There is also in the old pieces a far better opportunity to show a finely designed piece of stuff, and in the present case that opportunity is seized. A very beautiful material with a flower pattern alternated by stripes, the whole somewhat formal and exact but of singular beauty of composition, completes this piece in a way that few recent furniture coverings would make possible. R. Sturgis.

## HEPPELWHITE CHAIRS . . . . . 467

Two chairs whose forms are closely in agreement with those on pages 461 and 465. Another step in the gradually increased elaboration of these pieces is shown in the shaping of projecting bases, as it were, to the front legs. This is an entirely appropriate and fitting termination of such uprights. The only doubt about its propriety is in the comparative plainness which the workmen of the period agreed in giving to the legs of their chairs. It seems to be thought, and certainly not without reason, that these should be made so as to attract the eye less than other parts of the piece. R. Sturgis.



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| <p><b>HEPPELWHITE SIDEBOARD . . . . .</b></p> <p>Sideboard of about 1800, and probably the work of one of the famous English makers, although probably the handles of the drawer are not of the same epoch. There is very beautiful inlay of light wood on dark in the style of that introduced by Heppelwhite during the last years of the eighteenth century.</p> <p>There are three knife-cases standing on this sideboard, all of about the same date with it.</p> <p>It is a curious instance of the intelligence of design shown by these later eighteenth-century artists in furniture that their pieces look well with, and also without, the almost inevitable accessories. A sideboard of this date with its perfectly flat top is evidently made to receive the spoon-bowls, knife-cases, lamps, branched candlesticks and punch bowls which belong to it, and yet the piece is not felt to be naked and incomplete without them, however well it may look when they are set upon it. R. Sturgis.</p> | <p><b>FACING 470</b></p> |
| <p><b>SOFA . . . . .</b></p> <p>Covered sofa closely agreeing in design and character with that which is shown in the plate opposite page 466. Here also in each of these two sofas the thickening of the legs at the bottom, as if to make a little base, is noticeable. In this case the fluting of the legs gives an additional fitness to the little bases as affording a natural means of stopping the flutes and keeping them from reaching the floor. R. Sturgis.</p>   | <p><b>472</b></p>        |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY SOFA . . . . .</b></p> <p>Sofa of the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, carved with the solidity and massiveness of detail peculiar to the time. R. Sturgis.</p>  | <p><b>FACING 472</b></p> |
| <p><b>TWO CHAIRS AND A LETTER CASE . . . . .</b></p> <p>The chair on the left is of a design which Thomas Sheraton made peculiarly his own, the central slat being wrought into the guise of a classical vase with festoons, and this enclosed in a special arched open frame, reinforced in its turn by a secondary and plainer frame. The design is illogical enough, but its dignity and fitness for a room of reception and ceremony cannot be denied. The simple armchair on the right would seem to be of the design modified originally from the Windsor chair. Thus might a cabinet-maker of renown deal with the simple problem which that traditional form would offer him. R. Sturgis.</p>  | <p><b>473</b></p>        |
| <p><b>SHERATON CHAIR . . . . .</b></p> <p>A chair but slightly modified from the design shown on the left, page 473. This is another instance of a design, giving satisfaction to its maker and therefore played with, treated in different ways with but slight change of detail, and always with pleasure to workman and to purchaser. R. Sturgis.</p>   | <p><b>475</b></p>        |
| <p><b>SHERATON SOFA . . . . .</b></p> <p>Sofa of very fine and agreeable form; but the piece is in reality a completely covered sofa, with the wooden frame as completely concealed as is the stout wire frame of our modern <i>rembourré</i> style. The strip along the back is a mere adjunct to the actual framing-piece concealed by the stuff and that of the arms is even more slender, and as it were a wooden binding put on where a piece of passementerie might equally well have been used. R. Sturgis.</p>   | <p><b>479</b></p>        |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD AND CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS . . . . .</b></p> <p>Sideboard and two chairs; the chairs of about 1780, probably Chippendale of a simple pattern; the sideboard somewhat later, probably 1805, perhaps by Heppelwhite, retaining some of its original hardware and unrestored. Upon the sideboard are two knife-cases of polished wood, one open to show the interior arrangement.</p> <p>The sideboard is of singular beauty of design. The reeding of the legs would be alone recommendation enough to an ardent collector or student, for it is very rare that this detail</p>  | <p><b>FACING 480</b></p> |

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is so simple and successfully managed. The rounded member which forms one of the legs below forms above a perfectly well adapted corner-piece, and in another case an equally fitting division between the central mass and the side cupboards. The beauty of proportion and grace of outline of this piece are unsurpassed in pieces of this style and epoch. R. Sturgis.

### WORK-TABLE . . . . . 481

Work-table ; that is to say, a table in which a lower drawer has suspended from it and replacing a wooden bottom, some much larger receptacle which might, as in this case, be of stuff, silk, or some more costly textile material, and finished with a fringe. The piece on page 485 is of a different character, and the two show very well the tables used by ladies at a time when it was customary to have some pretty sewing work ready to carry on in the reception or sitting-room. Those were the days when there was not quite the same demand for constant amusement as is known in the twentieth century. The ladies of the time expected to make some sort of dainty occupation of work which had to be done or might be thought to need doing. The table itself is in this case extremely interesting, with prettily applied carving, which in itself is of merit. R. Sturgis.

### WORK-TABLE . . . . . 483

Work-table in which the triple design of the wooden frame allows equally for each of two possible distributions. The side pieces above may be work-boxes, that is, little tills for the keeping of spools, scissors, and the rest—what a sailor would call the dirty boxes—and the centre compartment being open allowed the arm to reach into the silk bag below. The other arrangement allowed by this table is a division of three bags with three separate openings to them from above, and a single cover to all three. R. Sturgis.



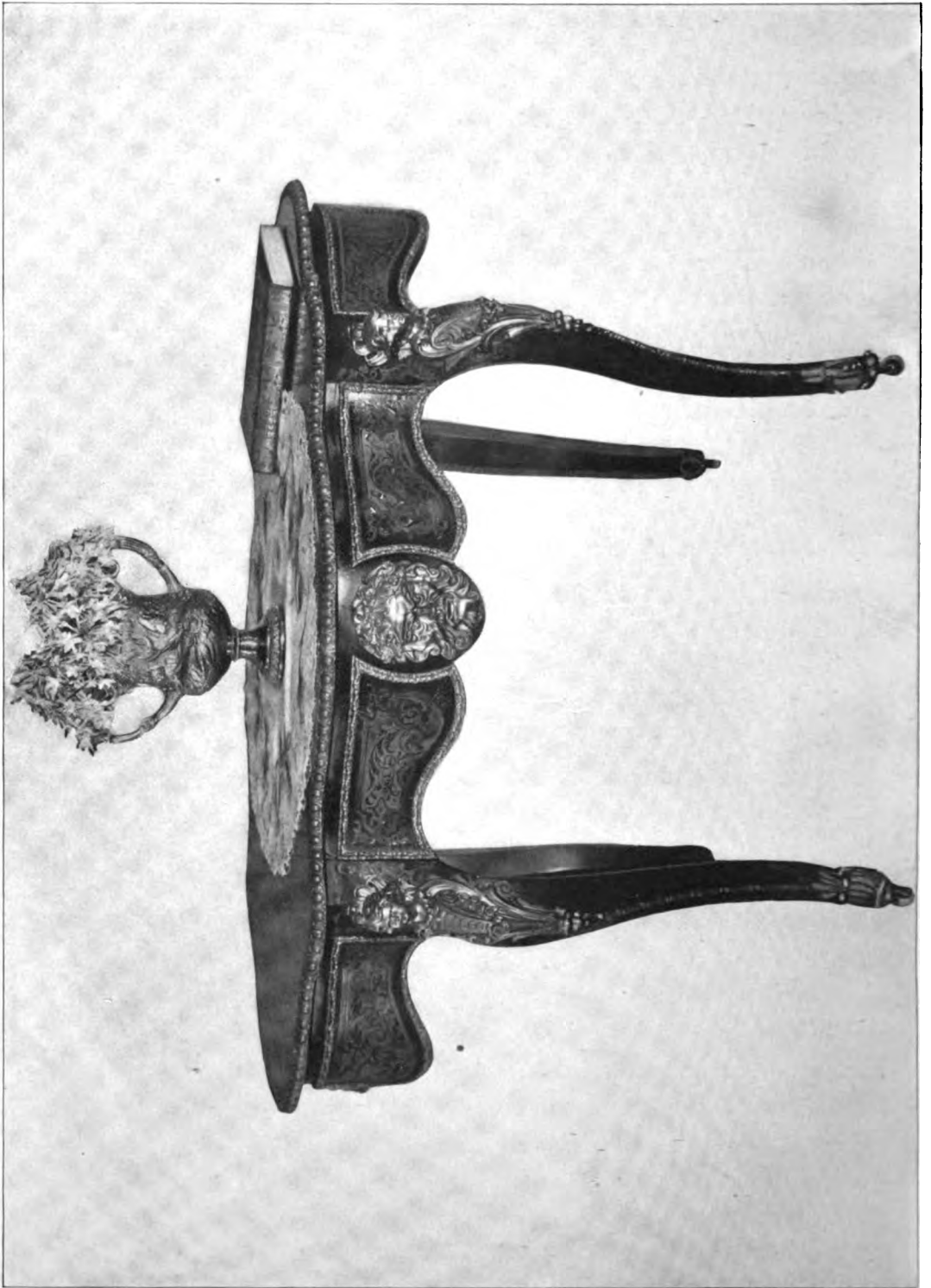


**THE FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS**

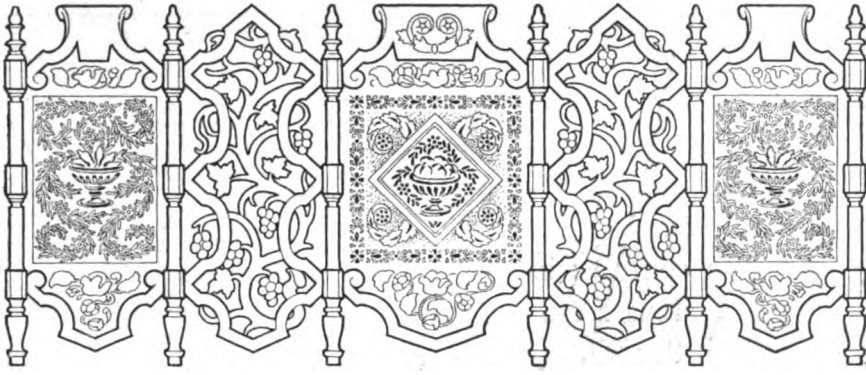
**Part VI**







*Originally belonging to the Breton family, New Orleans, was auctioned by Messrs. Andrew Symon & Co., Charleston, S. C. See page 107.*



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

## Part VI. Chippendale

AND OTHER GREAT CABINET-MAKERS OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



THE family of Boulle (written also Boule and Bühl) acquired great fame as cabinet-makers in the seventeenth century. The most celebrated was André-Charles, the son of Jean, and the nephew of Pierre Boulle. These elder Bouilles bore the title of "*menuisiers du roi*" and lived at the Louvre.

André-Charles Boulle, native of Paris, architect, painter, and sculptor in mosaic, born November 10th, 1642, died in Paris in the galleries of the Louvre, where he had had the honour of residing since 1672.

Boulle was not the originator of the style that bears his name: he carried it to such perfection, however, that it will always be associated with him. Long before Boulle began to work, Cardinal Mazarin owned a cabinet of tortoise-shell and ebony, outlined with copper-gilt and supported on copper-gilt monsters. This was still further or-



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namented with copper-gilt masques, cartouches, foliage, animals, and figures in bas-relief representing various fables from Ovid. From the reign of Henri IV., but more especially that of Louis XIII., there had been a growing use of metal in combination with wood, and the liking for and use of luxurious furniture, constructed of precious metals and richly decorated, was greatly fostered by Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin. The latter owned furniture of the most sumptuous description. At this period, the rich financiers furnished their homes with silver furniture,—a fashion brought over the Pyrenees with the daughter of Philip III. on her marriage with the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XIV.

Furniture under the latter monarch soon outshone that of past reigns, although, for the most part, it was sculptured in wood and gilt rather than chiselled out of metal. The King was not the only one to enjoy luxurious articles; as an example, we may recall the superb bed-room set of silver presented to Mlle. d'Aumont on her marriage with M. de Beringhen. Indeed there was so much extravagance that sumptuary laws were passed.

Furniture in precious metals had its influence as well as its comparatively short day, and wooden furniture was gilded and silvered in imitation of it. The furniture in the reign of the *grand monarque* was principally gilded: gold glittered everywhere.

In 1667, the *Manufacture royale des Meubles de la Couronne*—in other words, the Gobelins Manufactory (taking its name from the Gobelin brothers of Flanders)—was founded. The intention of the King and his minister of finance, Colbert, was to adorn the royal palaces with furniture hangings, bronze, mosaics, etc., etc., of the greatest

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splendour. The manufactory was placed under the direction of the famous painter Le Brun, who, in this capacity, gave French art a character of unity so perfect and complete as to impose French styles all over Europe. A vast number of artists and artisans worked under one governing idea. Boulle was made "*ébéniste, ciseleur, et marqueteur ordinaire du Roy*," and devoted himself to producing the furniture so well in harmony with the magnificence of Versailles, Marly, and other palaces of the King and his courtiers.

Boulle's furniture consists almost exclusively of armoires, consoles, tables and desks,—such forms as present large surfaces for decoration. It naturally follows that his designs are frequently four-square and heavy; yet they often take the curved, or *bombé* shape, and it is not uncommon to find the legs of his tables joined by the X-shaped stretcher. His cases for clocks are also valued.

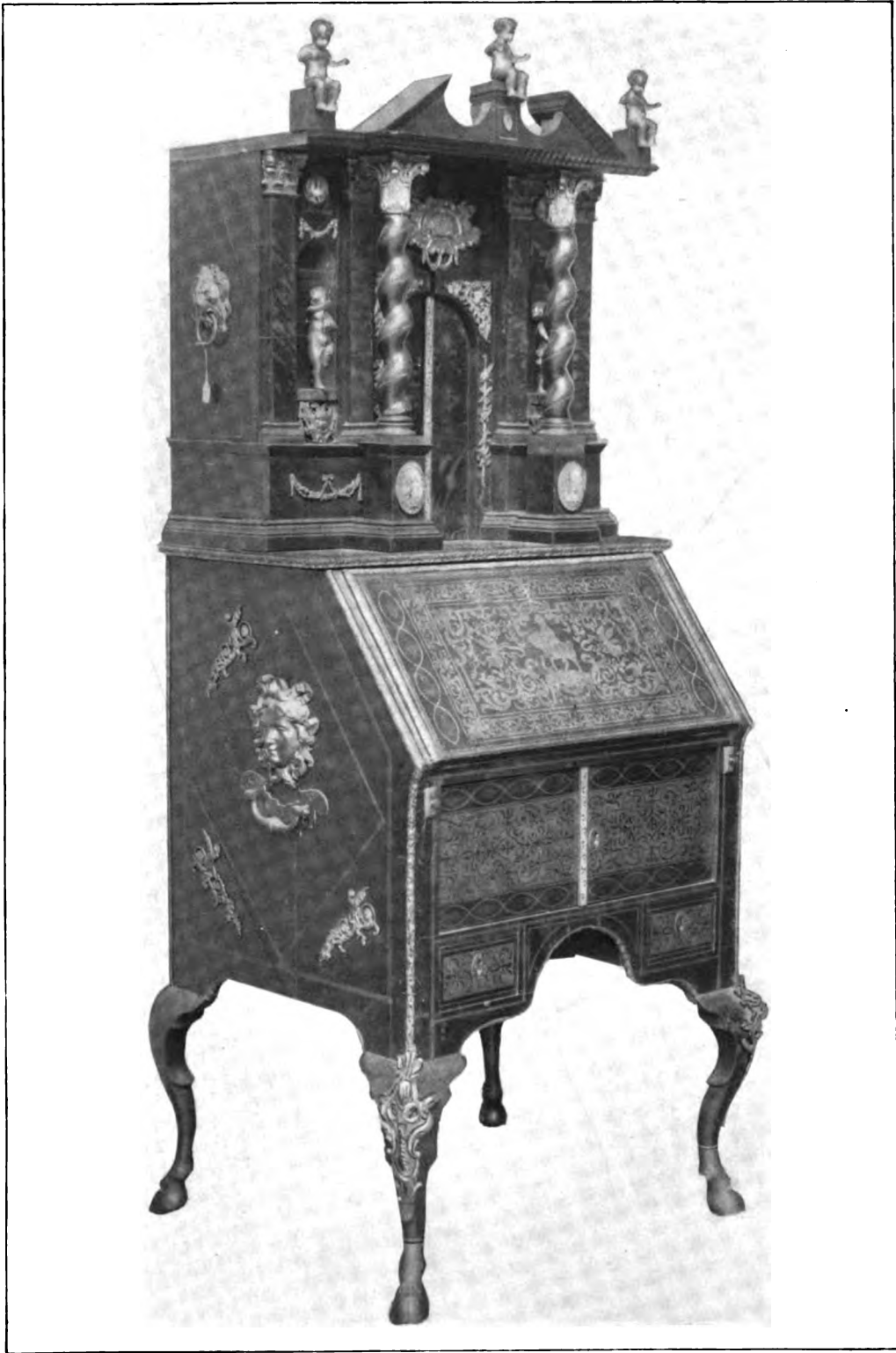
"No one would refuse to admit," says a modern French critic, "that the architecture is the least remarkable part of the creations of this celebrated artist. His great merit, independently of the perfection of the work of his *ébénisterie*, must be sought elsewhere. Boulle is a colourist in his art more than a designer. The contours of his furniture are often heavy and he added nothing new. You may find all the elements in the immense work of Le Brun, the great master of decorative art under Louis XIV. The superiority and the originality of this cabinet-maker consists in the admirable combination of the bronze and the copper with the background of the furniture which he understood how to vary infinitely by the multiplicity of incrustations and mosaics upon the groundwork of oak and chestnut. This was his palette, from which he drew his

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surprising effects and on which he played with his consummate virtuosity; it is to this that he owes his legitimate renown, greater even in England than it is in France."

Boullé's work is an intarsia or marquetry of tortoise-shell and metals. Ebony or oak forms the framework or background for the decoration. The designs of the ornaments of thin brass, or white metal, are usually branches of foliage or scrolls, and are sometimes elaborately engraved. Frequently these metal ornaments are fastened to the bed of wood with small brass nails, hammered flat, and afterwards chased, so that they are invisible. The method of incrustation was as follows: the workman superimposed a plate of metal and a plate of shell of equal size and thickness, and, after having traced his design upon this, cut the pattern out with a saw. He then had four ornamental designs, or patterns, two of which were hollowed out. Into the hollowed out tortoise-shell pattern he would fit the corresponding metal pattern, and into the hollowed out metal pattern he would fit the corresponding tortoise-shell pattern. Two pieces of furniture were frequently made at the same time. The tortoise-shell ground with the metal inlay was considered the "first part"; and the metal ground with the tortoise-shell inlay, "the counterpart." Frequently, also, the first and second parts were mingled in the same piece of furniture. An interesting example of such balancing belonged to Sir Richard Wallace; examples of the reverse designs occur in two console tables in the Galerie d'Apollon at Versailles.

The earlier style, called "old Boullé," was costly, owing to the waste in cutting; but the expense was lessened afterwards by sawing through several thicknesses of material



**BOULLE SECRETARY AND CABINET**  
*In Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. See page 408.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY  
540 EAST 57TH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637  
TEL. 773-936-3200

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and producing a number of designs at once. This process is known as "Bouille and Counter." In the "old Bouille" the shell was left in its natural colour; in the "new Bouille" it was laid on a vermilion or gilt ground. A beautiful example of the latter faces page 403. This table belongs to Mrs. Andrew Symonds of Charleston, S. C., having descended to her through the Breaux family of New Orleans. The shell used is that of the hawk's-bill turtle, or tortoise. The most prized scales are dark brown with light golden spots.

Bouille also used ebony, pearl shells, ivory and woods. That he worked in wood-marquetry we have proof from an *Inventaire* prepared by him after a fire had destroyed his workshop in 1720. He mentions: "Five boxes filled with different flowers, birds, animals, leaves, and ornaments in all kinds of natural colours, the greater number by Bouille père, made in his youth. Twelve cases of all kinds of coloured rare woods." He valued these at 8,000 livres.

Bouille, who was also a sculptor, frequently chased the mouldings, feet, etc., for his works.

The sons and pupils of Bouille sometimes used horn, coloured blue or red, instead of tortoise-shell. Among them may be mentioned Philippe Poitou, who became the King's marquetry-worker in 1698. The Crescents, father and son, who also made furniture enriched with ornaments of copper and shell, acquired fame during the Regency. The son was "*ébéniste des palais du duc d'Orléans.*"

At the period of Bouille's popularity in France, England's sumptuous furniture was silver beautifully embossed. A great interest was taken in carving in wood during the last part of the seventeenth century; but Steele includes in a humorous paper upon Lady Fardingale's stolen treas-

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ures (1710), "a small cabinet with six drawers inlaid with red tortoise-shell and brass gilt ornaments at the four corners," which shows that Boulle was fashionable in England at this date.

Porcelain was much used to ornament furniture in Boulle's day.

The Boulle cabinet, facing page 406, is in Memorial Hall, Philadelphia. It has *ormoulu* mounts; the front and flap of the desk are inlaid brass and tortoise-shell; the columns supporting the pediment are twisted with Corinthian capitals of brass; the pilasters and doors are of brown tortoise-shell; the Cupids and other ornaments are gilt; four porcelain medallions decorate the front, two are portraits of Henrietta Maria and Charles I., the other two are mythological subjects. The front hoofs are brass, the back hoofs of wood.

The two marriage coffers ordered by the king on the occasion of the marriage of his son, the Grand Dauphin, to Marie Christine de Bavaria, were probably the most ornate work of this celebrated *ébéniste*.

Another fine specimen of Boulle's work, a cabinet, said to have been made for the Cardinal de Retz, is preserved at Windsor Castle.

A very ornate cabinet by Boulle, owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, faces this page.

The difference between furniture characteristic of the seventeenth and that of the eighteenth century is sufficiently marked to be startling to one who has not studied the subject; he would make a grievous error in assuming that the change was sudden or abrupt. Even people who take an intelligent interest in the decorative arts, often speak of styles of ornament as if each were a separate



**BOULLE CABINET**

*In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass. See page 408.*



LIBRARY  
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AGRICULTURE AND  
FOREST SERVICE

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and independent creation, springing to life from one great brain, in full panoply, like Minerva. They also imagine that the old order immediately passes away, falling like blossoms before the first frosts. The transitional period with its modifications and developments is entirely lost sight of, the distinct characteristics of each style only being considered. This tendency to draw sharp dividing lines between periods is partly accountable for the fact that, as we shall see, the name *Chippendale* is loosely used as a designation for a whole period of furniture to which many artists and crafts-



MAHOGANY CHAIR

From the Glen-Sanders house, Scotia, N. Y.  
See page 463.

men contributed. Some space may therefore be profitably devoted to bridging the gulf between Jacobean furniture and that which appears in Chippendale's book.

It is only when art is at a low ebb in a community that a medley of moveables is found in wealthy homes; even the discovery of the strange products of the East and their importation soon brought about a demand for buildings and interior decoration in character with Oriental furniture and ceramics, as we shall see.

In Mediæval halls, the furniture is cumbrous and solid, in sympathy with the heavily carved wall and rafter, and seems almost to form part of the architectural decoration. In such a setting, furniture of delicate and graceful form would have been out of place. When, therefore, we remember that furniture contributed to effects of interior

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decoration, we can readily understand why it was specially designed by great artists, carvers and architects.

Let us now take a rapid survey of those who influenced the new developments.

Philibert de l'Orme (died 1570) designed chimney-pieces decorated with terminal figures, scrolls, escutcheons, etc.

Mathurin Jousse was a designer in metal mountings, etc. His book (1627) figures, also, a kind of invalid chair that can be propelled by the occupant, and a four-post bed with an early form of casters.

Jean Berain (1636-1711) employed his talents freely on the decoration of rooms and furniture.

Jean Le Pautre, who studied under a cabinet-maker named Philippon and died in 1682, designed tables, chimney-pieces, mirrors, *guéridons*, etc. His works, published in 1731, are full of French Renaissance details which must have been of great use to the English cabinet-makers, who, like Chippendale, delighted in florid carving. Moreover, his motives, doubtless, crossed the Channel, and were known to the native carvers forty years before his works were published in Paris, for a pupil of his, Daniel Marot, was one of the many skilful Huguenots employed in this branch of art who were forced to leave their country by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He went to Holland in 1686, and when the Prince of Orange became William III. of England, three years later, Marot became his chief architect and master of works. Staircases, panelling and all general furniture were among his numerous designs. He had become acquainted with the latest Dutch marquetry designs, and the Oriental wares with which the Low Countries were being inundated. His influence, therefore, in

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introducing the so-called Queen Anne style, must have been very potent.

In England, Marot found architects and workmen who were receptive and progressive. Inigo Jones, who died in 1653, had already worked in the Renaissance style. His Classic chimney-pieces were carved in wood, stone and marble by imported Italians. Foreign labour, however, was not required now, for an English school of carving of the highest ability had arisen, and at its head was the famous Grinling Gibbons (1650-1721), who in addition to his other work, carved wall-panels, mirror-frames and chimney-pieces. His most renowned pupils were Watson, Devot of Brussels (died 1715) and Laurens of Mechlin.

Designs in interior decoration and furniture were departing widely from what the conservative element considered advisable. Protests were soon heard against this license. In 1697, Evelyn writes: "As certain great masters invented certain new corbels, scrolls and modillions, which were brought into use; so their followers animated by their example (but with much less judgment) have presumed to introduce sundry baubles and trifling decorations (as they fancy) in their works. . . . And therefore, tho' such devices and inventions may seem pretty in cabinet-work, tables, frames and other joyners-work for variety, to place china dishes upon; one would by no means encourage or admit them in great and noble buildings."

Evelyn evidently alludes to the work of Borromini, Berain, Marot and their followers, who were bringing severity and restraint into disfavour. Marot was only one of many foreigners who worked in England. A list of the foreigners in London, soon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, reveals a great number of Huguenot join-

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ers, carvers and goldsmiths. It is well known that this exile drained France of many of her most skilful workmen, and proportionately enriched England, Germany and the Netherlands. French art, moreover, was imparted to the English cabinet-makers by many of the French designers and artists who visited and sometimes took up their residence in England. Among others, J. B. Monnoyer, commonly called Baptiste, died in London in 1699. Samuel Gribelin was another who worked chiefly in England, and died there in 1733. In 1682, he published *A Book of severall Ornaments*. Later publications of his were *A Book of Ornaments useful to Jewelers, Watchmakers and all other Artists* (1697) and *A New Book of Ornaments useful to all Artists*. Until the death of Queen Anne, however, it was the Dutch rather than the French that dominated English taste.

Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) superintended the furnishing and decorations of Queen Mary's apartments in Hampton Court Palace. There were alcoves in the dining-room for sideboard tables, and the carved chimney-pieces had receding shelves for china. There were also tables with carved and gilt frames and tops of coloured marble.

Mary had acquired at The Hague a mania for the collection of china ornaments, and on her accession this had a great influence in spreading the fashion. Lord Nottingham wrote in 1689 that the Queen visited many "India houses" (curiosity shops). The exchange of porcelain for ladies' cast-off clothing became a recognized trade.

William Kent (1684–1748) designed most of the furniture at *Houghton*, the seat of Sir Robert Walpole. Horace Walpole doubted his good taste; he says: "Chaste as these ornaments were, they were often immeasurably pon-

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derous. His chimney pieces, though lighter than those of Inigo, whom he imitated, are frequently heavy ; and his constant introduction of pediments and the members of architecture over doors and within rooms, was dispropor-



CHAIR

Owned by Miss Sherburne, Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H. See page 456.

tionate and cumbrous. Kent's style, however, predominated authoritatively during his life ; and his oracle was so much consulted by all who affected taste, that nothing was thought complete without his assistance. He was not only consulted for furniture, as frames of pictures, glasses, tables, chairs, etc., but for plate, for a barge, for a cradle. And

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so impetuous was the fashion, that two great ladies prevailed on him to make designs for their birthday gowns. The one he dressed in a petticoat decorated with columns of the five orders; the other, like a bronze, in a copper-coloured satin with ornaments of gold."

The English, Dutch and Portuguese trade with the



MAHOGANY CHAIRS

Owned by Stephen Girard, now in Girard College, Philadelphia. See page 463.

East had greatly affected taste in furniture during the second half of the seventeenth century. An early lover of Chinese art was Cardinal Mazarin. He hit upon an ingenious way of bringing Oriental goods into prominence in the fashionable world as early as 1658. An entry in the diary of the King's cousin, La Grande Mademoiselle, relates how: "He took the two queens, the princess and myself into a gallery that was full of all imaginable kinds

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of stone-work, jewelry and all the beautiful things that came from China, crystal chandeliers, mirrors, tables, cabinets of all kinds, silver plate, etc." These were for a lottery in which every one was to have a prize.

The Cardinal started the taste for Chinese products so successfully that, in 1686, when Count Lauzun and the above famous princess had quarrelled, the count could think of no better way to conciliate her than by sending her a cargo of Chinese goods from England.

At this period, Paris received most of her Oriental wares through London or Amsterdam, though later there were enormous importations through L'Orient. Evelyn notes in his *Diary*, March 22, 1664: "One Tomson, a Jesuite shewed me such a collection of rarities, sent from ye Jesuites of Japan and China to their order at Paris, as a present to be received in their repository, but brought to London by the East India ships for them, as in my life I had not seen. The chiefe things were rhinoceros's horns; glorious vests wrought and embroidered on cloth of gold, but with such lively colors, that for splendour and vividness we have nothing in Europe that approaches it. . . fanns like those our ladies use, but much larger, and with long handles curiously carved and filled with Chinese characters; a sort of paper very broad, thin and fine like abortive parchment, and exquisitely polished, of an amber yellow, exceedingly glorious and pretty to looke on; several other sorts of paper, some written, other printed; prints of landskips, their idols, saints, pagods, of most ugly serpentine monstrous and hideous shapes, to which they paid devotion; pictures of men and countries rarely printed on a sort of gum'd calico transparent as glasse; flowers, trees, beasts, birds, etc., excellently wrought in a sort of sleve silk very naturall."



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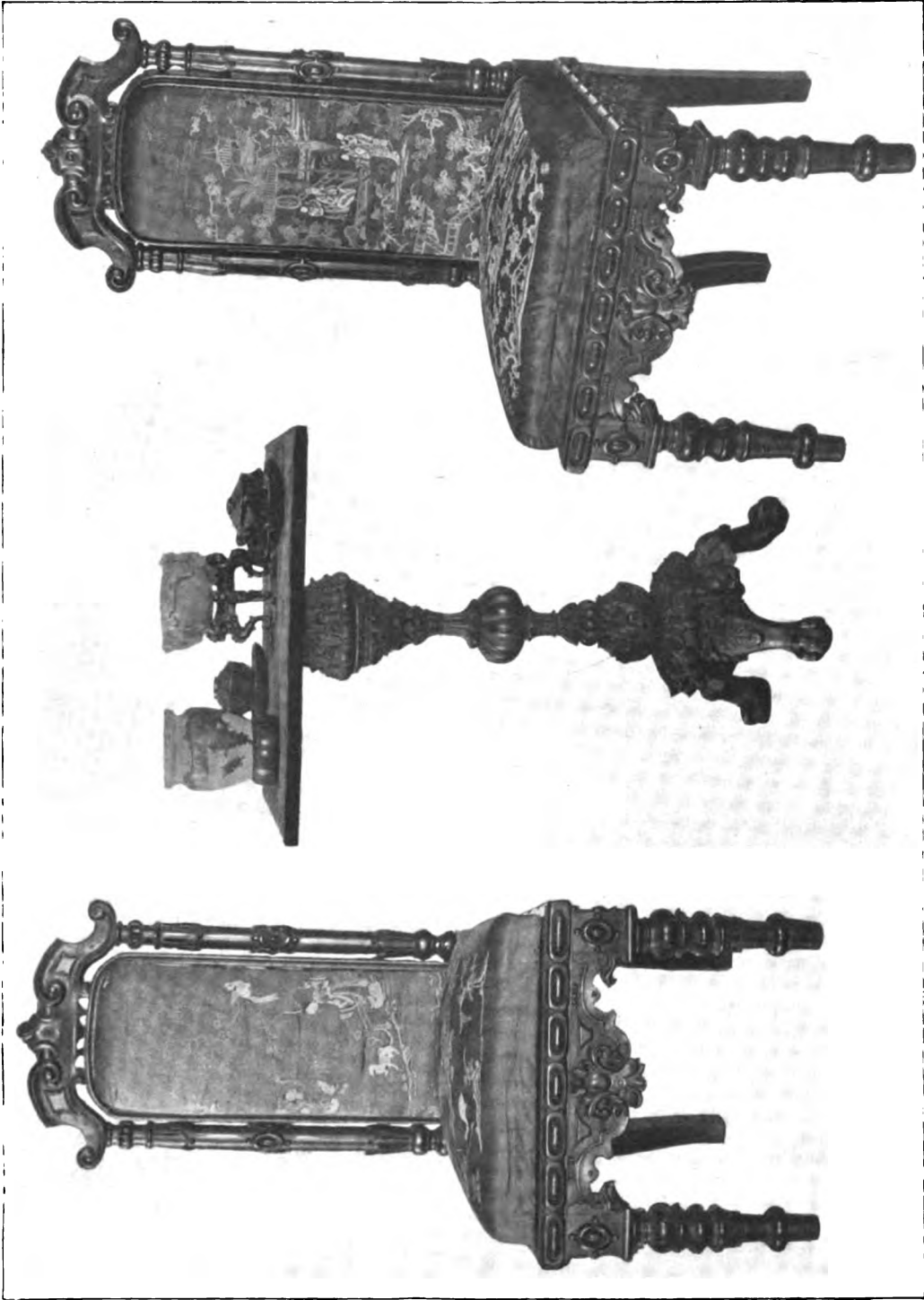
In 1676, he says that Lord Wotton's "furniture is very particular' for Indian cabinets, porcelane, and other solid and noble moveables."

We have already seen how early and in what quantities all kinds of Oriental wares reached the American colonies.

A carved ebony cabinet is shown on the frontispiece. It belonged to Houqua, a mandarin of China, and is now owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith of Smithtown, L. I. The two ebony chairs and table on the opposite page, and the ebony chair and set of lacquer tables facing page 424, also belong to Mrs. Smith and have the same origin. It is well known that fashion in China is not very mutable and therefore that the styles here depicted are most likely the same as those that prevailed during the period we have been examining. The ball-and-claw feet of the table and the high-backed chairs with turned legs may well have been prototypes of early eighteenth-century furniture. The carved heads on the armchair (facing page 424) and the squat bulging legs with claw feet are curiously familiar.

It can be readily understood how the interiors of rooms would be affected when porcelains had to be displayed to the best decorative advantage. The chimney-piece suffered considerable modifications. Daviler, in his *Cours d'architecture* (1691), says: "The height of the cornice (of the chimney-pieces) should be raised six feet in order that the vases with which they are ornamented may not be knocked down."

Marot's designs are most instructive on this point. Some show high cornices and door-tops loaded with bowls and vases, and the walls have tiers of small brackets between the decorative panels, each holding a piece of china. An over-mantel, nearly sixteen feet in height, is adorned



CARVED EBONY CHAIRS AND TABLE  
Owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithtown, L. I. See page 416.



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with eleven carved images and two hundred and seventy-five cups, vases and bowls arranged symmetrically; the varied sizes and shapes produce a splendid effect. The adjoining wall-panel is painted with four subjects in tier that are clearly recognizable as Chinese,—a temple, some figures



MAHOGANY CHAIRS

Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn. See page 463.

and some kind of dragon being the most characteristic. Marot's willingness to adopt Oriental subjects for interior decoration shows what public taste was beginning to demand. His successors found this new impulse sweeping everything before it.

From the accession of William III. till the death of Queen Anne, the ties between England and the Low Countries were very close. After William's death, Marlbor-

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ough's campaign enabled thousands of English officers to become acquainted with Flemish art and fashions, and made them hostile to everything French. The "Queen Anne" style is thus essentially Anglo-Dutch, with China as a dominant note.

In 1711, Addison thus describes a lady's "library": "The very sound of a *Lady's Library* gave me a great Curiosity to see it; and as it was some time before the Lady came to me, I had an opportunity of turning over a great many of her Books which were ranged together in very beautiful Order. At the End of her Folios (which were very finely bound and gilt) were great jars of *China*, placed one above another in a very noble piece of Architecture. The Quartos were separated from the Octavos by a Pile of smaller Vessels which rose in a delightful Pyramid. The Octavos were bounded by Ten dishes of all Shapes, Colours and Sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden Frame, that they looked like one continued Pillar indented with the finest Strokes of Sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of Dyes. That Part of the Library which was designed for the Reception of Plays and pamphlets and other loose Papers, was enclosed in a kind of Square consisting of one of the prettiest grotesque Works that I ever saw, and made up of Scaramouches, Lions, Monkeys, Mandarines, Trees, Shells, and a thousand other odd Figures in China Ware. In the midst of the Room was a little Japan Table with a quire of gilt Paper upon it, and on the Paper a Silver Snuff-box made in the shape of a little Book. I found there were several Counterfeit Books upon the upper Shelves, which were carved in wood, and several only to fill up the number."

Cabinet-makers of that day bowed gracefully to the

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prevailing taste and imitated Chinese and Japanese work in a class of furniture with lac-work panels and rich gilt metal mounts. This "black" furniture ornamented in gold-dust with raised Chinese figure designs was in great demand. It found its way to this side of the Atlantic, and sometimes appears in the inventories.

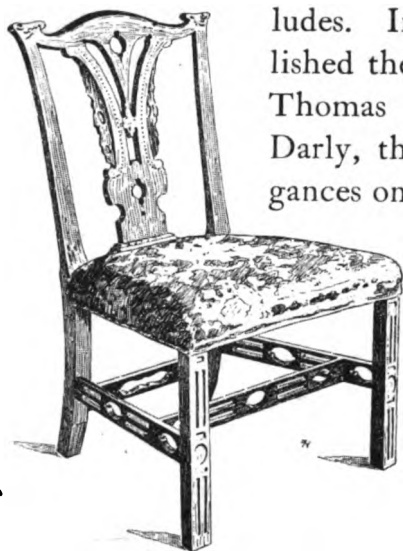
In 1724, Defoe writes that china is piled on the top of cabinets, secretaries and every chimney-piece to the tops of the ceilings, on shelves set up to hold it.

The carved objects in ivory, ebony, teak and other woods, the metal wares, the pictures on silk and paper, the fans, and, above all, the porcelains ornamented with scenes of temple, palace and cottage architecture, and interior decorations, opened an entirely new vista of art and ornamental design.

Sir William Chambers is generally credited with the responsibility for this Chinese fad. This, however, is an entirely erroneous impression, for the fashion had taken deep root long before he published the sketches and measurements he had taken in Canton. Indeed, he intimates that he is partly induced to give them to the world as a corrective. In his preface he says: "It was not my design to publish them, nor would they now appear, were it not in compliance with the desire of several lovers of the arts, who thought them worthy of the perusal of the publick, and that they might be of use in putting a stop to the extraordinary fancies that daily appear under the name of Chinese, though most of them are mere inventions, the rest copies from the lame representations found on porcelain and paper-hangings."

Chippendale, whose work had been published four years previously, is one of the offenders to whom he al-

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MAHOGANY CHAIR

Originally owned by Cornelia Haring Jones,  
now by Mrs. John Bleecker Miller, New York.  
See page 460.

ludes. In the very year in which he published the above, two books appeared, by Thomas Johnson and by Edwards and Darly, that fully illustrate the extravagances on which he animadverts. Among the decorative devices are temple, bridge, summer-house, hermitage, alcove, orchestra, water-summer-house, oval landscape, water-piece, fishing with birds, landscape with archers, fishing with nets, dragon boats, pleasure boats, birds, beasts, grand bed, palanquins, arm-chair, canopy, philosopher, mandarin and soldier, man-

darin and fakir, procession, tea-drinking, flowers, etc.

A still earlier publication of this school was William Halfpenny's *New Designs for Chinese Temples, Triumphal Arches, Garden-Seats, Palings, etc.* (London, 1750-1752.) The author was a carpenter and architect and he was assisted by his son. Extravagant fancy could hardly excel their designs. Describing a "Chinese alcove seat" fronting four ways, they suggest that "above the crown of the cove may be a room wherein musicians may be secreted and play soft music to the agreeable surprise of strangers; the performers going in by a subterranean passage." A richly carved "Chinese settee" of the Chippendale school faces page 430. It belonged to Governor Wentworth and is still owned by his descendants, in the Ladd House, Portsmouth, N. H. See also page 369.

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Besides the Chinese craze, a kind of spurious Gothic revival affected decorative art to some extent towards the middle of the century. No review of the period would be complete without some attention being paid to this movement. The Gothic style had fallen into ill-repute. In 1697, John Evelyn calls it "a certain fantastical and licentious manner of building which we have since called *Modern* (or *Gothic* rather) conjections of heavy, dark, melancholy and monkish piles without any just proportion, use or beauty. . . . So when we meet with the greatest industry and expensive carving, full of *fret* and lamentable *Imagry* a judicious spectator is distracted and quite confounded. . . . Not that there is not something of solid and odly artificial too, after a sort: but then the universal and unreasonable thickness of the walls, clumsy buttresses, towers, sharp-pointed arches, doors and other apertures without proportion; nonsense insertions of various marbles impertinently placed; turrets and pinnacles thickset with Munkies and chimæras and abundance of busy work and other incongruities dissipate and break the angles of the sight and so confound it that one cannot consider it with any steadiness. . . . Vast and gigantic buildings indeed but not worthy the name of architecture."

This opinion was shared by most people, and the only thing about Gothic architecture that was valued seems to have been its ruins. Some of the nobility are even said to have dismantled their castles purposely; and the old furniture was utterly despised. The formal Dutch gardens also began to give way to a new style about this time, and ruins came in handy. In 1728, Batty Langley published *The Principles of Gardening*. One plate shows "an avenue, in perspective, terminated with the ruins of an ancient



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building after the Roman manner;” and eight other plates show “views of ruins after the old Roman manner for the termination of walks, avenues, etc.” Some of these are of Classic and others of nondescript Gothic architecture. “Such walks that end in disagreeable objects” are to be adorned with these ruins which “may either be painted upon canvas, or actually built in that manner with brick, and covered with plastering in imitation of stone.” Ruins were freely used as decorative accessories by the contemporary French masters of design, and the English carvers were adopting them in their work. Chippendale makes great use of ruins as well as the other details of rococo ornament. The gardens of the day supplied the designers with other suggestions besides floral devices and ruins. One of Langley’s plates shows “a fountain and cascade after the grand manner at Versailles.” He adds: “When figures of shell-work are erected in the midst of fountains, we receive a double pleasure of a fountain and cascade also by the waters agreeably murmuring down the rocky shells.” It is this rock-and-shell work that is so characteristic of Louis Quinze work; and of which Chippendale liberally avails himself.

In 1742, Langley brings out *Ancient Architecture*. It is “restored and improved by a great variety of grand and useful designs entirely new in the Gothic Mode for the ornamenting of buildings and gardens exceeding everything that’s extant.” The author’s list of the “Encouragers” includes eighty-one of the nobility, two bishops, nine judges, two ladies of title, sixteen gentlemen, three carpenters, one smith and one mason. Horace Walpole’s name appears on the list: he is usually credited with being responsible for the Gothic revival, but he did not buy *Strawberry Hill* till six years after this date, and not till 1750

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does he announce: "I am going to build a little Gothic castle." The truth is that he merely infused new life into the fashion, for, in 1756, Ware says: "The Gothic is distinguished from the antique architecture by its ornaments being whimsical and its profiles incorrect. The inventors



CHIPPENDALE CHAIR

In the house of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. See page 462.

of it probably thought they exceeded the Grecian method, and some of late have seemed, by their fondness for Gothic edifices, to be of the same opinion; but this was but a caprice, and, to the credit of our taste, is going out of fashion again as hastily as it came in. . . . The error of the late taste has been in attempting to bring the Gothic into use in smaller buildings, in which it can never look well."

The influential list of Langley's "Encouragers" shows

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the fashionable vogue of the so-called Gothic in 1742. Mrs. Delany's letters also show that Walpole was following rather than introducing a style. In 1754, she writes: "I am working stools in worsted chenille for the Gothic cell." Two years later, in describing Lady Oxford's house, she mentions a great Gothic hall, and adds: "The chapel is to be new built in the same taste; the alterations Lady Oxford made in this place cost above 40,000 pounds, and her apartment is the prettiest thing I ever saw, consisting of a skylight antechamber or vestibule, adorned in the Gothic way. The rooms that encompass it are a library, a dressing-room, a room fitted up with china and Japan of the rarest kinds, and a Gothic room full of charming pictures, and embellished with everything that can make it look gay and pleasant: it is lighted by a window something of the Venetian kind, but prettier, and the whole breadth of one side of the room."

Again, in 1758, she writes: "My closet is just hung with crimson paper, a small pattern that looks like velvet; as soon as dry, I shall put up my pictures; and I am going to make a wreath to go round the circular window in the chapel, of oak branches, vines and corn; the benches for the servants are fixed, the *chairs* for the upper part of the chapel are a whim of mine, but I am not sure till I see a pattern chair that I shall like it; it is to be in the shape and ornamented like a Gothic arch."

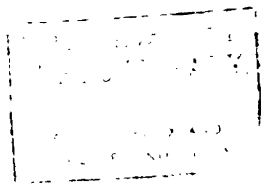
Walpole was one of the few who recognized that the "Gothic" of his day was not the real thing. In 1790, the *Gentleman's Magazine* says:

"Through the inability of his architects, particularly of Langley (who, though esteemed capital in his day, knew nothing of the art of constructing modern Gothic), his



SET OF LACQUER TABLES AND CARVED EBONY CHAIR

*Owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithstown, L. I. See page 416.*



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ideas were never properly executed. Mr. Walpole often complained they were rather Moorish than Gothic; however he could not at that day procure better assistance. He was always, however, among the first to depreciate his own architecture."

It would seem that the English cabinet-makers of this period had fallen into the very reprehensible practice of making furniture without any reference to the interior decoration of the houses. Chinese, Gothic and French Renaissance schemes of decoration had played havoc with Classic ideals, and the sacred Five Orders were in danger of losing their authority even in England. In 1740, Langley calls attention to this in *The City and Country Builder's and Workmen's Treasury of Designs* :

"The great pleasure that builders and workmen of all kinds (those called Cabinet-Makers, I think, only excepted), have of late years taken in the study of architecture has induced me to the compiling of this work. And indeed I am very sorry that cabinet-makers should have been supine herein; because of all small architectural works, none is more ornamental to buildings than theirs.

"The evil genius that so presides over cabinet-makers as to direct them to persevere in such a pertinacious and stupid manner that the rules of architecture, from whence all beautiful proportions are deduced, are unworthy of their regard, I am at a loss to discover; except Murcea, the Goddess of Sloth, acts that part and has thus influenced them to conceal their dronish, low-life, incapacities and prompt them, with the fox in the fable, to pronounce grapes sour that ripen out of their reach.

"Cabinet-makers originally were no more than Spurious Indocible Chips, expelled by joiners for the superfluity of

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

their sap, and who, by instilling stupid notions and prejudice to architecture into the minds of youth educated under them has been the cause that at this time 'tis a very great difficulty to find one in fifty of them that can make a book-case, etc., indispensably true after any one of the Five Orders without being obliged to a joiner for to set out the work and make his templets to work by.

“ But if these gentlemen persist much longer thus to despise the study of this noble art, the very basis and some of their trade, which now to many joiners is well understood, they will soon find the bad consequence of so doing and have time enough on their hands to repent of their folly. And more especially since that our nobility and gentry delight themselves now more than ever in the study of architecture which enables them to distinguish good work and workmen from assuming pretenders.”

He gives more than four hundred designs, including buffets, cisterns, chimney-pieces, pavements, frets, clocks, frames for marble tables “ after the French manner,” marble and stone tables, for grottos, arbors in gardens, pedestals for sun-dials and busts, a chest of drawers, medal case, cabinet of drawers and a dressing-table all “ enriched after the French manner.” The dressing-table is also draped: this, as well as the table-frames, are most interesting as being frankly taken from the French and showing much of the carved ornamentation that appears still further developed in Chippendale's book fourteen years later.

Following these, come “eight designs of book-cases, which, if executed by a good joiner, and with beautiful materials, will have good effects, or even if by a cabinet-maker, provided that he understands how to proportion and work the Five Orders, which at this time, to the shame

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of that trade be it spoken, there is not one in a hundred that ever employed a moment's thought therein, or knows the Tuscan from the Doric, or the Corinthian from the Composite Order, and more especially if the Doric freeze



MAHOGANY CHAIRS

Originally belonging to Philip Van Rensselaer, now owned by Mrs. Edward Rankin at *Cherry Hill*, Albany, N. Y. See page 463.

hath its triglyphs and mutules omitted. In short the ultimate knowledge of these sort of workmen is generally seen to finish with a monstrous Cove, or an Astragal, crowned with a Cima Reversa, in an open pediment of stupid height.

“When a Gentleman applies himself with a good design of a book-case, etc., made by an able architect, to most of



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the masters in this trade, they instantly condemn it and allege that 'tis not possible to make cabinet-works look well that are proportioned by the Rules of Architecture; because, they say, the members will be too large and heavy, etc., whereas the real truth is that they do not understand how to proportion and work the members of those designs and therefore advise the unwary to accept of such Stuff as their poor crazy capacities will enable them to make, and wherein 'tis always seen that the magnitudes of their Coves and Cima Reversas (their darling finishing) are much larger members than any members of a regular cornice (even of the Tuscan Order) of the same height, wherefore 'tis evident that all their assertions of this kind are used for nothing more than to conceal an infinite fund of stubborn ignorance which cannot be paralleled by any other set of mortals in the world."

No examination of the influences that affected English work during the early part of the eighteenth century would be adequate unless it took into account the contemporary French school of design. The goldsmiths, artists and architects under the Regent and Louis XV. neglected Classical authority and frankly adopted Chinese models in their designs, as well as Arabesques with ape-forms and floral devices. Watteau designed furniture and did not disdain Chinese panels. It must be remembered that he spent the year 1719 in England. J. Pillement, who did so much Chinese work, found it worth while to bring out *A New Book of Chinese Ornaments* in London in 1755.

Nearly every decorative artist of the day made some use of the Chinese. However, the masters of *rocaille* ornamentation were most strongly to influence Chippendale, since England already had had her own Chinese craze. A

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most important leader of this school was J. A. Meissonier, who was designer of *orfèvrerie* to the king. Facility, power and entire lack of restraint characterised his designs. In 1754, Cochin, the engraver, published a satirical "supplication to goldsmiths, chisellers, carvers of woodwork for apartments, and others, by a society of architects." In this, the goldsmiths are begged, "when executing an arti-



AN ARMCHAIR AND TWO SHERATON CHAIRS

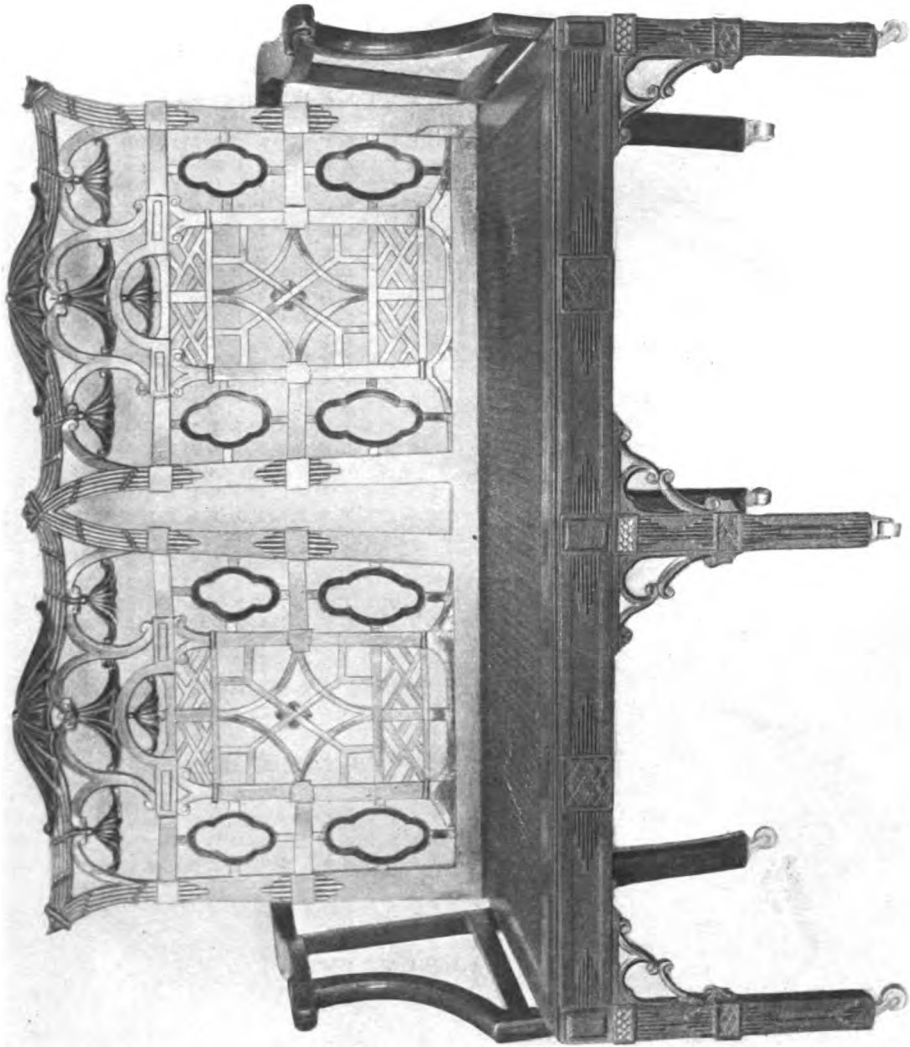
Belonging to the Fletcher family. From the collection of the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass. Owned by Mr. E. R. Lemon. See page 462.

choke, or a head of celery in its natural size on some piece of carved work, to be good enough not to place beside it a hare as big as one's finger, a life-size lark, and a pheasant one-fourth or one-fifth of its natural size; children of the same size as a vine-leaf; or figures of supposed natural size supported by a decorative flower that could scarcely bear a little bird without bending; trees with trunks slimmer than one of their own leaves, and many other equally sensible things of the same kind. We should also be infinitely obliged to them if they would be good enough not to alter

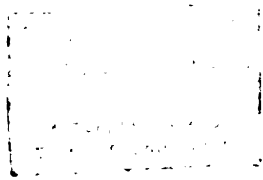
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the uses of objects but to remember, for instance, that a chandelier should be straight and perpendicular, in order to carry the light, and not twisted as if somebody had wrenched it; and that a socket-rim should be concave to receive the running wax and not convex to shed it back upon the chandelier; and a multitude of other no less unreasonable particulars that would take too long to mention. Similarly, carvers of the interior decorations of rooms are begged to be obliging enough, when executing their trophies, not to make a scythe smaller than an hour-glass, a hat or Basque-drum larger than a bass-viol, a man's head smaller than a rose, nor a sickle as large as a rake."

In their supposed reply to this supplication, the followers of the new design say in part: ". . . It was necessary to find another kind of architecture in which every worker could distinguish himself and make the public acquainted with a way of becoming skillful that should be within everybody's reach; nevertheless, accepted prejudices were not to be rudely shocked by the sudden production of novelties too remote from the reigning taste, thereby running the risk of hissing. At first the famous Oppenord served us with great zeal. . . He made lavish use of our favourite ornaments and brought them into good credit. Even now he is useful to us, and there are some of us who take him for a model. . . We found a firmer support in the talents of the great Meissonier. It is true that the latter had studied in Italy, and consequently was not one of us, but as he had wisely preferred the taste of Borromini to the wearisome taste of the antique, he had thereby approached us; for Borromini rendered the same service to Italy that we have to France, by introducing there an architecture gay and independent of all those rules that of old



**"CHINESE" SETTEE**  
*Originally owned by Governor Wentworth. See page 420.*



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were called good taste. Meissonier commenced to destroy all the straight lines that were used of old; he turned and made the cornices bulge in every way; he curved them above and below, before and behind, gave forms to all, even to the mouldings that seemed least susceptible of them; he invented contrasts;—that is to say, he banished symmetry, and made no two sides of the panels alike. On the contrary, these two sides seemed to be trying which could get farthest away, and the most strangely, from the straight line that till then they had been subject to.”

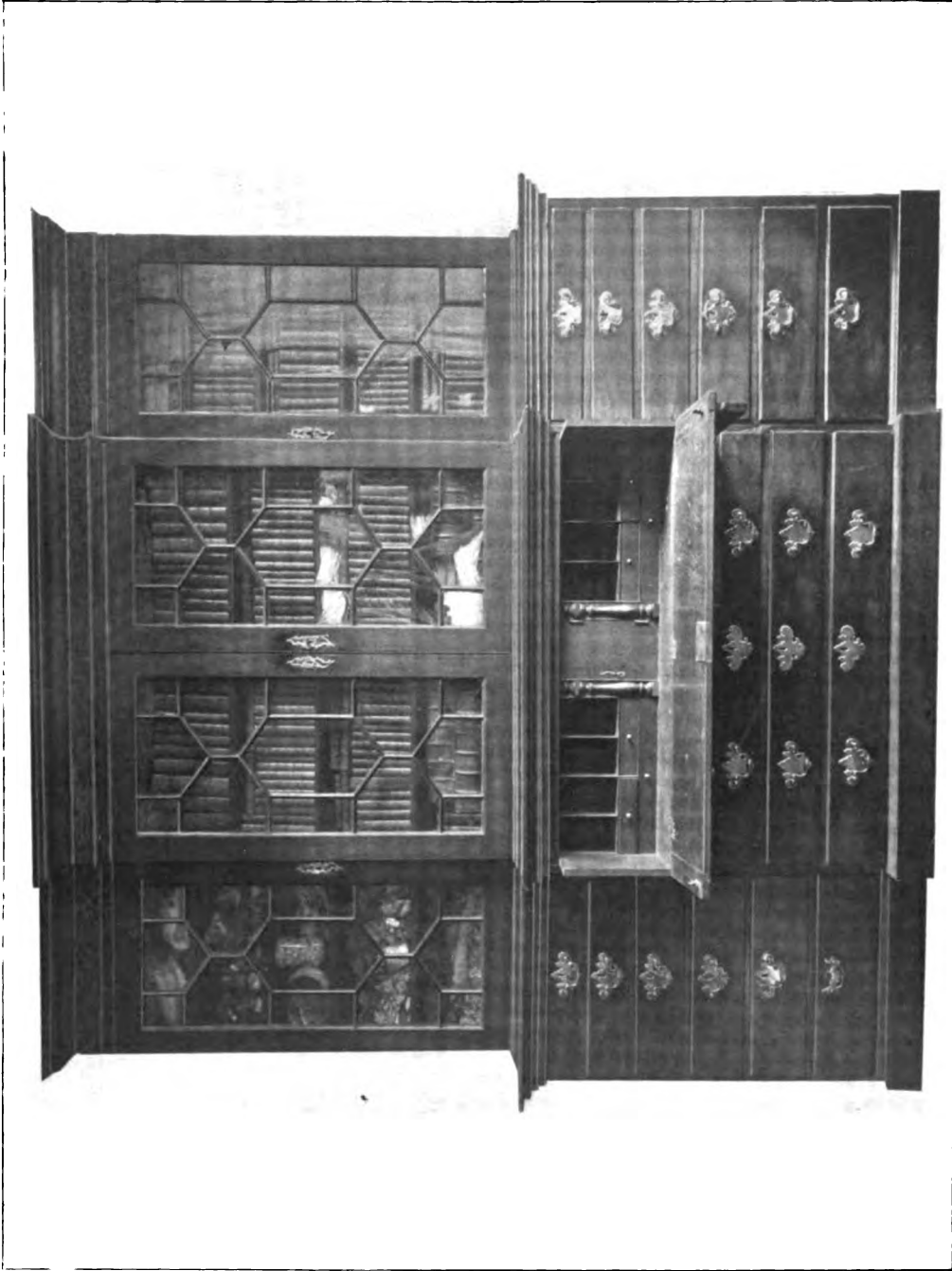
It is difficult for us to echo the irony;—much less indignation—of the critic of this artist who exercised so great an influence on the decorative art of the eighteenth century. The charge of having been lacking in simplicity, of carrying to extreme limits curved lines, scrolls, shell-work and all that fantastic architecture of a period that had taken a dislike to everything that was dry and angular, does not trouble us, who, on the contrary, think that these artists carried spirit and grace very far. The designers of this school paid great attention to shell-work, just as those of the sixteenth century were particularly fond of architectural arrangements (and it was the latter taste that still dominated English design) and just as those of the following reign were fascinated by the garland and the quiver. The taste of the Regency is as attractive to the present generation as that of the Empire is chilling. Meissonier's lines are essentially voluptuous and almost as essentially feminine. Japanese art goes much further in the direction of contrasts and lack of equilibrium, and we do not condemn it. The *rocaille* work is an orgy of all kinds of flowing lines, curves, cascades, shells, endive leaves and even clouds and smoke. Other decorators with less invention

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followed Meissonier, such as Michel-René, Stoldz and Chevillon. They also used the forms drawn from the shell, cabbage-leaf and prawn, but they added even more vague and flowing forms such as fountains, ostrich plumes, etc. La Joue is even a past master in the art of introducing into a decorative panel a cascade that sometimes falls, no one knows whence, and breaks into pearly foam. Everything is an excuse for cascades; neighing horses prancing in the bath, a dragon crawling against the base of a column and spouting water from open jaws, a hunted stag vomiting a stream of water into the round and grooved basin beside which he has taken refuge.

We shall shortly see the tremendous influence that the new school of French design exercised on Chippendale, whose book appeared in the very year in which Cochin's criticism was written. Before leaving Meissonier, however, attention should be called to the intimate relationship he insists on between interior decorations of apartments and their furniture. Take, for example, one of his plates, *Projet de Porte d'Appartement fait pour Mme. la Baronne de Brezenval*, on page 47 of his *Oeuvre*. Here we have a chair on each side of the door, besides a table with graceful cabriole legs and another chair in the room beyond. This furniture not only corresponds in its contours to those of the general decorative scheme, but the details of the carving on the framework are identical with those used on the walls.

Of English cabinet-makers, the name that overshadows all others is that of Thomas Chippendale. Many of his successors gained a renown that has endured, but his name is popularly used as a generic term for almost all the furniture that was in vogue for more than half a century. It is



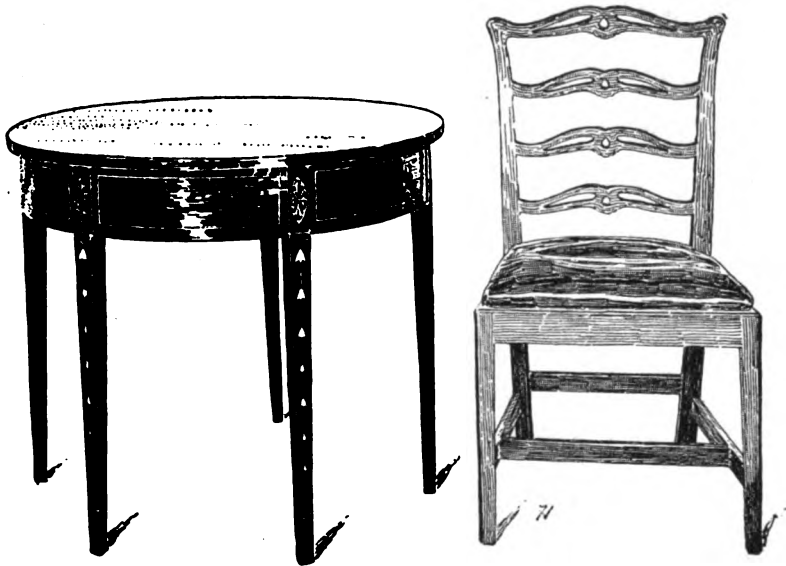
: CHIPPENDALE BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY  
*Owned by Miss Sberburne, Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H. See page 458.*





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strange that scarcely anything is known of one to whom such great influence and importance are now generally attributed. The very date of the book that brought Chippendale into notice is variously given, though there should be no question about this. His preface is dated March,



CHIPPENDALE CHAIR AND HEPPELWHITE CARD TABLE

Owned by Miss Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y. See page 462.

1754, and in April, 1754, the *Gentleman's Magazine* announces, among the new books on mechanics, *The Gentleman's and Cabinet-Maker's Directory*, by Thomas Chippendale, £2-8-0. The third and last edition published by him appeared in 1762. In all probability, the author died soon after this.

The only facts reported about him are that he was born in Worcestershire, went to London and found employment as a joiner. There, in the reign of George I.,

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he was a successful carver and cabinet-maker. Some critics hold that he was already at work in 1720. If he was eminent in his craft during the reign of George I. (*i. e.*, before 1727), he can scarcely have been very active later than 1765, or more than forty years afterward. It is not therefore unreasonable to suppose that he was born about 1695 and died about 1765, thus reaching man's natural term of life.

During the second half of the century, there were certainly two Chippendales, and probably several of the family at work. In 1826, George Smith, who was upholsterer to the king, issued his *Cabinet-Maker's Guide*. In this he speaks of "the elder Mr. Chippendale" and adds: "Mr. Thomas Chippendale (lately deceased) and known only amongst a few, possessed a very great degree of taste with great ability as a draughtsman and designer." Thus we have specific evidence that there were at least two Chippendales, and that one, comparatively obscure, died shortly before 1826. The latter, although an able draughtsman and designer, is very unlikely to be the same individual that had published, seventy years before, a book that was plainly the work of a man already well established in business. The more reasonable conclusion is that at least two Chippendales were engaged in designing as well as making furniture.

The lack of detailed information about Chippendale would argue that public interest in him was not very keen, and that the impression produced by his work on his contemporaries and immediate successors was not profound. If his renown had been great, we should expect to find other workmen recommending themselves at home, and more especially on going to the colonies, as having been



**SETTEE**

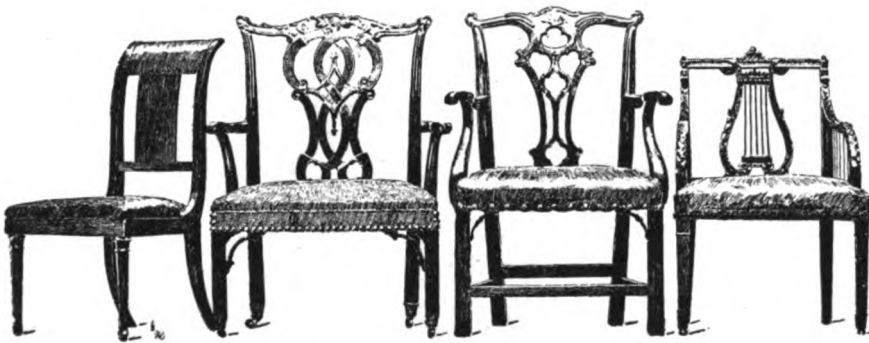
*Originally owned by John Hancock, now by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. See page 459.*



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with him, and as being able to make his well-known furniture, so greatly in demand. We should also anticipate finding that furniture that was distinct in type from all that had gone before would bear the name of the famous designer, and that others would recognize his authority unquestioningly, and confessedly follow him.

When we search for evidence on these points, we reach very curious results. Sheraton (1791) says in his preface :



CHIPPENDALE AND SHERATON CHAIRS

See page 461.

“I have seen one (book of design) which seems to have been published before Chippendale’s. I infer this from the antique appearance of the furniture, for there is no date to it; but the title informs us that it was composed by a society of Cabinet-makers in London.”

“Chippendale’s book seems to be next in order to this, but the former is without comparison to it, either as to size or real merit. Chippendale’s book has, it is true, given us the proportions of the Five Orders, and lines for two or three cases, which is all it pretends to relative to rules for drawing; and, as for the designs, themselves, they are now wholly antiquated and laid aside, though possessed

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of great merit, according to the times in which they were executed. . . .

“After Chippendale’s work, there appeared, in the year sixty-five, a book of designs for chairs only, though it is called *The Cabinet-Maker’s real Friend and Companion*, as well as the Chairmaker’s. . . .

“The succeeding publication to this seems to be Ince and Mayhew’s *Book of Designs in Cabinet and Chair Work*, with three plates containing some examples of foliage ornaments, intended for the young designer to copy from, but which can be of no service to any learner now, as they are such kind of ornaments as are wholly laid aside in the cabinet-branch, according to the present taste. The designs in cabinets and chairs are, of course, of the same cast, and therefore have suffered the same fate; yet, in justice to the work, it may be said to have been a book of merit in its day, though much inferior to Chippendale’s, which was a real original, as well as more extensive and masterly in its designs. . . .

“In the year 1788 was published the *Cabinet-Maker’s and Upholsterer’s Guide*. But notwithstanding the late date of Heppelwhite’s book, if we compare some of the designs, particularly the chairs, with the newest taste, we shall find that this work has already caught the decline, and perhaps, in a little time, will suddenly die in the disorder.”

From the above testimony, which certainly is not hostile to Chippendale, we gather that, forty years after its appearance, his book was entirely neglected, notwithstanding the real talent displayed. We also gather that Sheraton does not regard Chippendale as a great innovator who revolutionized the furniture of his day and introduced a radically new style. Moreover, he considers the furniture

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in a certain book to be more antiquated than Chippendale's, and thence argues that it must, therefore, have been published before his. The fact is that the book referred to came out six years later than Chippendale's, and its designs are like the latter in general form. If, however, Sheraton is correct in saying that it does represent furniture in use before Chippendale published his work, we may safely conclude that it was only in the ornamental details that the furniture of the day was affected by the latter.

George Smith published *Designs for Household Furniture* in 1808. In this, he bewails the fact that first-class artists do not (as they do in France) provide designs for the cabinet-maker and upholsterer. He adds: "Very great encouragement has been given of late by our Nobility and Gentry to various artists employed in cabinet-work, the good effects of which will, I doubt not, soon be felt; for as the beauty of the Antique consists in the purity of design, and what was pleasing centuries ago continues to be equally so now, so I do not despair of seeing a style of furniture produced in this country which shall be equally agreeable centuries hence."

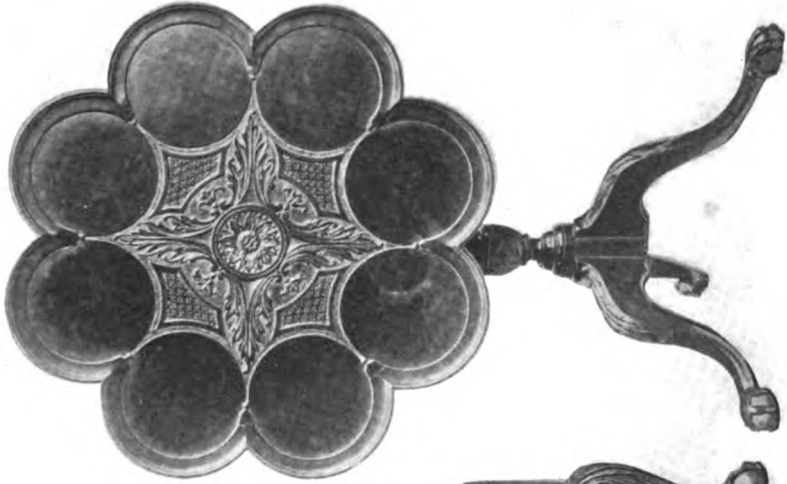
To Mr. Smith, whose unlovely productions were being bought by the Prince Regent, the nobility and gentry, it would have been a great surprise to learn that "Chippendale" styles, which he deemed buried beyond resurrection, would be equally pleasing a century after his own were deservedly forgotten. It is remarkable that Chippendale might never have existed so far as Mr. Smith's generation was concerned. Eighteen years later, he finds that he himself has become antiquated, but takes comfort from the fact that perfection has at last been attained! Describing with some accuracy the sequence of styles in Eng-



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lish furniture since the close of the carved-oak period, he says:

“ At this period (Louis XIV.) the whole system seems to have given place to a style completely Arabesque, although blended with much grandeur peculiar to this taste, and brought to great perfection by the artists then employed in its manufacture. The importation of it into England changed the whole feature of design as it related to household furniture. This taste continued almost unchanged through the reign of George II. and the earlier part of George III. The elder Mr. Chippendale was, I believe, the first author who favoured the public with a work consisting of designs drawn from this school, with great merit to himself, however defective the taste of the time might be. To this work succeeded that of Mr. Ince in the same style. From this period to the time of Messrs. R. and J. Adam, the same species of design continued, with little or no alteration, until the researches of these scientific gentlemen in architecture and ornament were made public. A complete revolution in the taste of design immediately followed: the heavy panelled wall, the deeply coffered ceiling, although they offered an imposing and grand effect, gave way to the introduction of a light Arabesque style and an ornament highly beautiful. But the period for the introduction of not only a chaste style in architecture, but likewise of ornament (and which extended to our domestic moveables) was reserved for the late Mr. James Wyatt, whose classic designs will carry his name to posterity with unimpaired approbation. Here it would appear almost unnecessary for invention to have gone farther, but perfection, it appears, was reserved for this present period.”



**WRITING-CABINET AND TWO TABLES**

*Owned in England. See page 458.*



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Apart from his book, which brought him into temporary prominence, Chippendale seems to have been an obscurely prosperous tradesman who catered to the tastes of



DOUBLE CORNER CHAIR

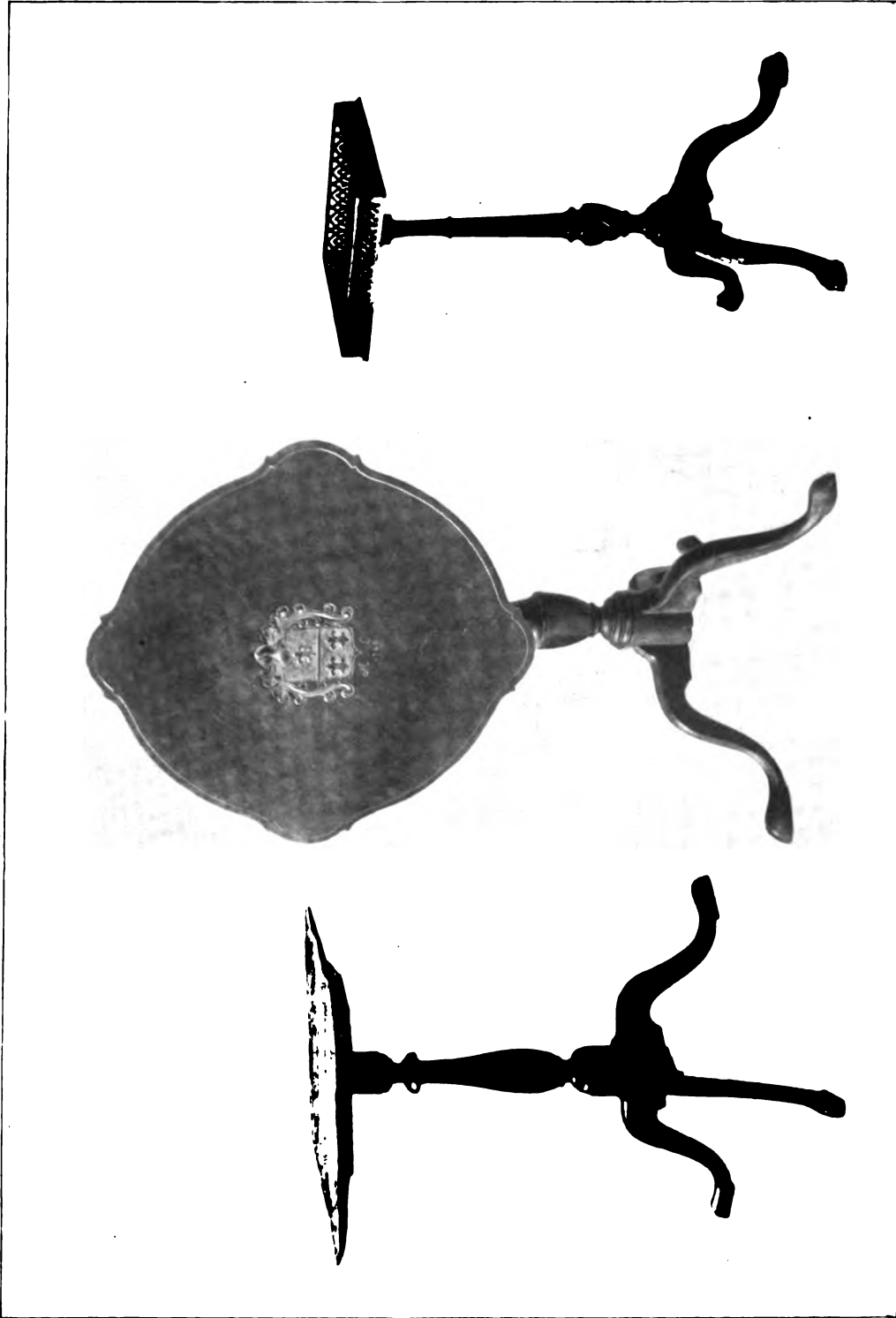
Owned by Mr. Walter Hosmer, Wethersfield, Conn. See page 460.

the day. His biographer in the exhaustive *Dictionary of National Biography* can find little more to say of him than that he flourished circa 1760. He was not the only successful member of his craft in London during the first half of the eighteenth century, if we may believe the following advertisement in a New York paper in 1771:

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

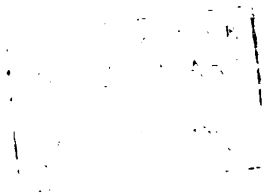
“To-morrow will be sold at public vendue at the Merchants’ Coffee house at twelve o’clock by John Applegate, a very neat set of carved mahogany chairs, one carved and gilt sideboard table, and a Chinese hanging bookcase with several other things. N. B. The back of the chairs is done after the pattern of some of the Queen’s; a sketch of which chair will be shown at the time of the sale. The chairs and other things were made by a person in the Jersies who served his time and afterwards was eleven years foreman to the great and eminent cabinet-maker, William Hallet, Esq.; that bought the fine estate of the Duke of Shandos, called Cannon’s, in Middlesex; was afterwards a master for about twenty years in London and hath been two years in the Jersies. He will receive any orders for furniture, viz., Plate cases or best Chinese hanging book-cases or on frames; French elbow chairs, ribbon back, Gothic or any sort of chairs, likewise carved, glass frames, gerrandoles, bracket branches, etc.”

Who was Willim Hallet, Esq.? The great *Dictionary* is silent concerning him, notwithstanding his purchase of the fine estate of the Duke of Chandos. The “person in the Jersies” served him as foreman from 1738 to 1749. Were the chairs, with backs “done after the pattern of some of the Queen’s,” of Chippendale design? If so, it ought to have been worth while to mention that fact if Chippendale was a recognized authority, and to have claimed the latter as a master rather than “the great and eminent cabinet-maker, William Hallet, Esq.” Even if the advertisement was a catch-penny scheme, it is plain that in 1771 the name of Hallet was considered a better bait in New York than that of Chippendale; and this was only nine years after the latter had issued the third edition of his book. It is



MAHOGANY TABLE WITH CARVED COAT-OF-ARMS AND TWO MAHOGANY TEA-  
KETTLE STANDS

*Owned by Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn. See page 460.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

also worthy of note that no tradesman whose advertisement I have seen in an American paper prior to the Revolution ever mentions the name of Chippendale in recommending home-made or imported furniture.

We have now arrived at the following facts: before Chippendale brought out his book in 1754, he was no more prominent than many another prosperous cabinet-maker; thirty-five years later, whatever was original and peculiar to him in that work had become "wholly antiquated and laid aside," and, lastly, he never attained such a commanding position in his profession or trade as did George Kent in his, for instance.

We have seen that hitherto most of the new designs in furniture originated with artists or architects. Chippendale was only a not-very-eminent carver and cabinet-maker. The list of subscribers to his book includes, besides nobility, gentry, joiners and carpenters, eighty-three London cabinet-makers, ten carvers and two engravers. M. Darly is one of the engravers; and W. Ince is one of the cabinet-makers. Ince was soon to publish an important book of designs to advertise the product of his own firm; and Darly was Chippendale's assistant, who engraved and designed some of his plates. In 1773, he published *A Complete Body of Architecture*, "embellished with a great variety of ornaments, compiled, drawn and engraved by Matthias Darly, Professor of Ornament." In the preface he says: "Ornamental drawing (drawing of ornament) has been too long neglected in this trading country and great losses have been sustained in many of our manufactures for want of it. On the knowledge of true embellishment depends the improvement of every article, and I do aver that this kingdom is more indebted to a Rich'd Langcake (who is now



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teaching the art of design in France) than to a Sir Godfrey Kneller.”

Chippendale has evidently taken to heart Langley’s savage attack on the English cabinet-makers for their ignorance of the sacred Five Orders (see page 425). It has been a puzzle to many critics to account for the fact that he devotes much space to elucidating that style of architecture and then proceeds to give designs of furniture in the prevailing bastard Gothic and Chinese taste, and ornament the rest with French Renaissance and *rocaille* details. When we remember Langley’s wholesale condemnation, however, Chippendale’s lip-service is perfectly explicable. In his preface, the latter says :

“Of all the arts which are either improved or ornamented by Architecture, that of Cabinet-making is not only the most useful and ornamental, but capable of receiving as great Assistance from it as any whatever. I have therefore prefixed to the following designs a short Explanation of the Five Orders. Without an acquaintance with this Science and some Knowledge of the Rules of Perspective, the Cabinet-maker cannot make the Designs of his work intelligible, nor shew in a little Compass, the whole Conduct and Effect of the Piece. These, therefore, ought to be carefully studied by everyone who would excel in this Branch, since they are the very Soul and Basis of his Art.”

Having thus done his best to conciliate the architects, he proceeds to explain his purpose in publishing :

“The Title-Page has already called the following Work, ‘The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director,’ as being calculated to assist the one in the Choice, and the other in the Execution of the Designs: Which are so

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contrived, that if no one Drawing should singly answer the Gentleman's Taste, there will yet be found a variety of Hints sufficient to construct a new one."

"In other words, the main object is to induce the gentlemen to buy! First discover which model he likes and then suit him with the enrichment; the ornamentations are not necessarily individually appropriate, but are interchangeable. If his taste runs to the Chinese now in vogue, here is an assortment of frets from which to select; if Gothic, here are a few examples of window tracery; if he likes florid carving, here is a storehouse of suggestions conveyed from the French Renaissance!

"I have been encouraged to begin and carry on this Work not only by Persons of Distinction, but of eminent taste for Performances of this sort; who have, upon many Occasions, signified some Surprise and Regret, that an Art capable of so much Perfection and Refinement, should be executed with so little Propriety and Elegance.

"Upon the whole, I have here given no Design but what may be executed with Advantage by the Hands of a skilful Workman, though some of the Profession have been diligent enough to represent them (especially those after the Gothic and Chinese Manner) as so many specious Drawings, impossible to be worked off by any Mechanic whatsoever. I will not scruple to attribute this to Malice, Ignorance, and Inability; and I am confident I can convince all Noblemen, Gentlemen and others, who will honour me with their Commands, that every Design in the Book can be improved, both as to beauty and Enrichment, in the execution of it, by

"Their most Obedient Servant,

"Thomas Chippendale."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

It is to be noted that though Chippendale puts forth these designs as within the ability of every good workman to execute, he does not pretend that they have already been produced, except in some instances which he specifies. In



CHAIR

Owned by Mr. Stephen Schuyler, Schuyler House, Troy Road, New York. See page 464.

many cases his words clearly imply that the designs have yet to take concrete form, and in at least two instances this is distinctly stated. Thus: "Gothic bookcase: one of the best of its kind, and would give me great pleasure to see it executed, as I doubt not its making an exceeding genteel and grand appearance."

Another desk and bookcase is "in the Chinese taste and will look extremely well." Considering the "malice,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ignorance and inability" of his rivals, we should expect him to specify the designs that have actually been carried out, in refutation of their assertions, but he instances only the following: "A Design of a Dressing Table for a Lady. Two Dressing Tables have been made of Rosewood from this Design, which gave an entire satisfaction. All the Ornaments were gilt."

"Design for a couch bed. . . . N. B. This couch was made for an alcove in Lord Pembroke's House; at Whitehall." "A bed that has been made for the Earls of Dumfries and Morton."

"Three designs of chairs with Ribband Backs. Several sets have been made, which have given entire satisfaction."

It is to be noted that though Chippendale insists on the practicability of all his designs without exception, yet in his instructions he frequently recognizes that the carving may be excessive. He often says that the decoration may be reduced, if necessary, without diminishing the beauty of the design. A typical suggestion reads: "The ornaments may be omitted if thought superfluous." Above all else, Chippendale was a carver and gilder: that fact is stamped on every plate. It would be almost impossible to over-estimate the importance he attaches to carving. A few examples from his own instructions will make this clear: "A Design of a Sofa for a grand Apartment, and will require Great Care in the Execution, to make the several Parts come in such a Manner that all the Ornaments join without the least Fault; and if the Embossments all along are rightly managed, and gilt with burnished Gold, the whole will have a noble Appearance. The Carving at the Top is the Emblem of Watchfulness, Assiduity and Rest. The

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Pillows and Cushions must not be omitted, though they are not in the Design. I would advise the workman to make a model of it at large before he begins to execute it." Here not only the carver, but the sculptor and clay-modeller speaks! "Thirteen Designs of Cornices for Beds or Windows," some of them are crown-shaped, and the carved ornaments include the twisted leaf, urn plain and draped, eagle, birds billing, grotesque head, monkey holding a husk garland in his mouth, and birds with long tails and bills. Among eighteen other beds one "may be gilt or covered with the same stuff as the curtains;" another has pillars "composed of reeds with a palm branch twisted round." Of a couch with canopy, he says: "If the curtains and valances are adorned with large gold fringe and tassels and the ornaments gilt with burnished gold, it will look very grand." A design for a commode table and two candle-stands is very ornate: "The Bas Relief in the Middle may be carved in Wood or cast in Brass or painted on Wood or Copper. That part in the middle may be a door with ornaments on it and the End parts in the same manner. On the top of the commode is a design of a Sur-tout, to be made in Silver. A candlestand at each end is very proper." The commode contains a panel representing three naked boys playing and landscape behind them, framed in garlands. The "sur-tout" is a kind of candelabrum. One candlestand has dolphins at its base, their tails curling upward, and two boys climbing a tree above which are icicles or dropping water. The other represents a woman standing upon a sort of stump and clasping a branch upon which the candlestand rests.

"A Toilet or Dressing-box for a Lady. . . . The ornaments should be gilt in burnished gold, or the whole

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

work may be Japanned and the drapery may be silk damask with gold fringes and tassels." Another toilet: "The glass, made to come forward with folding Hinges is in a carved frame, and stands in a compartment that rests upon a plinth, between which are small drawers. The Drapery



ONE OF A SET OF MAHOGANY CHAIRS

Belonging to Prof. Henry P. Archer, Charleston, S. C. See page 464.

is supported by Cupids, and the Petticoat goes behind the Feet of the Table, which looks better. The ornamental parts may be gilt in burnished gold or Japanned." A China case in the Chinese style, "may be of soft wood and Japanned, or painted and partly gilt." A china case "very proper for a lady's dressing-room may be made of any soft wood and Japanned any colour." Chandeliers: "They are generally made of glass and sometimes of brass. But

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

if neatly done in wood, and gilt in burnished gold, would look better, and come much cheaper." Frame for marble slab supported by Caryatides, Dove Entablature with Triglyphs and Metopes, ram's head and garland. Another "supported by two piping Fauns, leaning against two vines, intermixed with foliage, etc. It will have a grand appearance if executed with judgment and neatly gilt." One girandole "requires great care in the execution. The Imbossments must be very bold and the Foliage neatly laid down, and the whole properly relieved. The Top may be gilt, as likewise some of the other ornamental parts." Picture frames, elaborately carved with emblems appropriate to the subject on the canvas, were also gilded. Where gilding cannot be used, Chippendale obtains its effect by the free use of brass, the importance of which he strongly accentuates.

A carver and gilder with a considerable leaven of upholstery! That is the impression gained from a careful perusal of Chippendale's text. A maze of contours and forms, a haze of blue and red and a blaze of gold! Carving and colour are the striking characteristics, and the carving contains exactly the same faults complained of by Meissonier's satirist. The crow with the cheese at the top of a mirror-frame is twice as big as the insidious fox below; in another, the bunch of grapes that the fox maligned is bigger than himself. It also hangs so close and so menacingly above him that he seems to be crawling from under it in apprehension, though it is easily within his reach. It would be puzzling to account for the similarity between the decorative details of the work of Chippendale and that of a foreign master if neither could be shown to have borrowed from the other. It becomes a very simple matter, however,



**CHIPPENDALE STANDS**

*In Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. See page 459.*

**SETTEE**

*Owned by Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn. See page 459.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

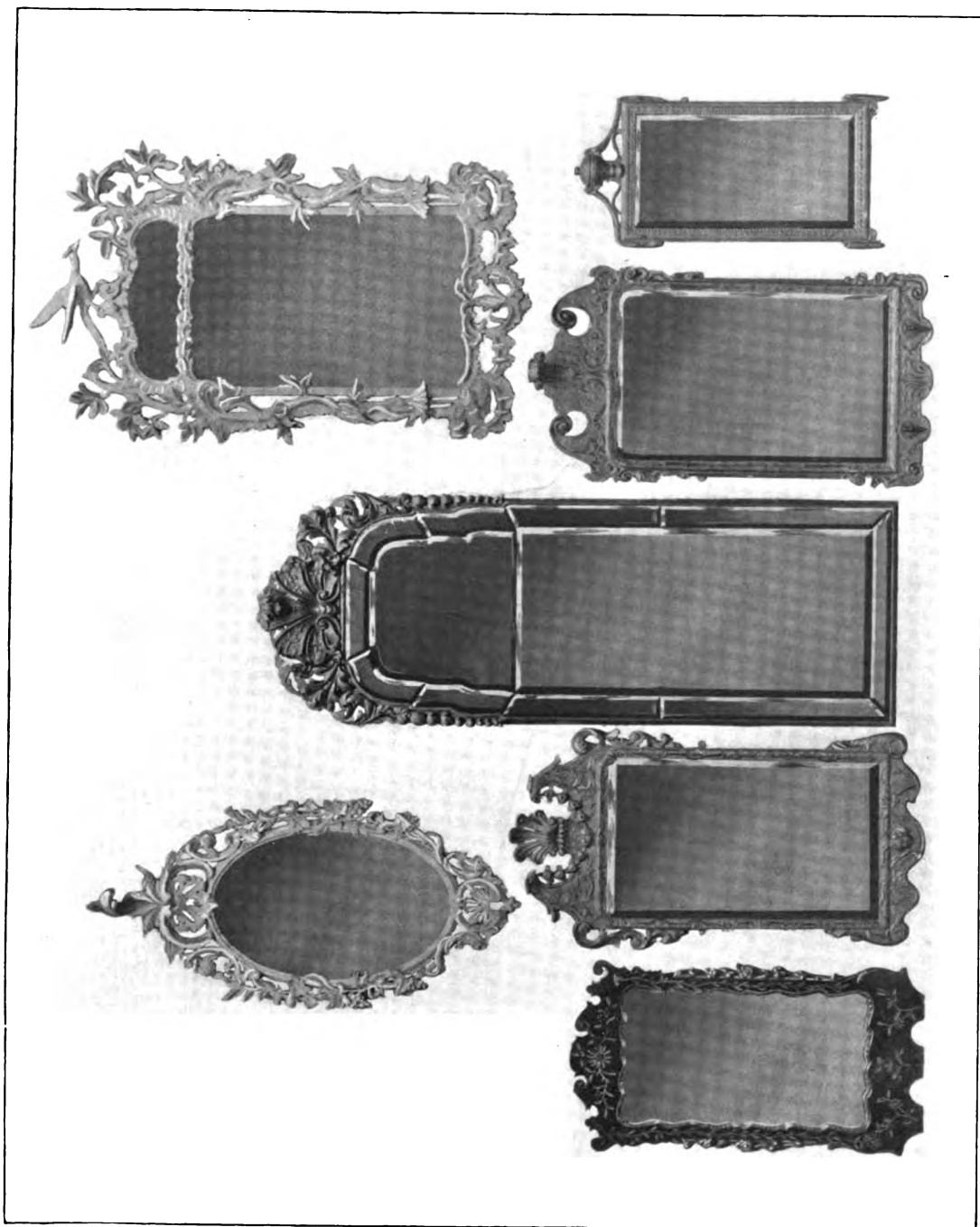
when we place the designs of the two side by side, and find that the chair that Meissonier designed for Mme. de Brezenval in 1735 (see page 432) is boldly transferred by Chippendale to his book without acknowledgment and is simply called a French chair. The form and carving are identical; the only difference is that Chippendale adds an extra flourish where even Meissonier refrained. An ornate *canapé*, executed in 1735 for the Grand Marshal of Poland, is also manifestly the original of Chippendale's design of his "sofa for a grand apartment." In this case, however, he has stuffed the arms and added some carving on the top. Other designs of Meissonier's to which Chippendale is indebted are the picture frames for the King's portrait and the Royal Hunt. Of these Chippendale has made free use. One of the trophies, consisting of a hunting-horn, stag's head, gun and net, pleases him sufficiently to be adopted in its entirety. Meissonier's designs, especially in his *Livre de Légumes* and *Livre d'Ornements*, contain *chutes* and swags of bell-flower and laurel, shell-work, fountains, colonnades, balconies, balustrading, flights of steps, acanthus and other flowers, fruits, human figures, birds, animals, scroll-work, dripping and falling water, feathers, flags, musical instruments, weapons and implements. Some of the falling water and fragmentary peristyle effects of which Chippendale is so fond in his carved frames are particularly noticeable. Another plate that must have struck Chippendale's attention shows an elaborate *surtout* made for the Duke of Kingston in 1735. The ornamental details include dripping water, fruits, fish, vegetables, dead game, shell, cupids and all the spiky scroll-work characteristic of Meissonier. It must be remembered that Chippendale's confessed aim is to serve the nobility and gentry. If the

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

latter, therefore, show any marked favour to the work of a foreign artist, it surely would be worth while to follow in the latter's footsteps. Why should the Duke of Kingston and others be forced to go to Paris, when we have carvers in London who are perfectly able to do that kind of work, and when all the material is at hand for the most extravagant carved work that can be conceived? If *surtouts* are in demand, Chippendale can supply a design for one in silver for the top of a commode.

The design is found among Meissonier's plates, but Chippendale has introduced slight modifications in the proportions. Although Chippendale owed so much to Meissonier, he also went to others for inspiration. Marot's tall clock-cases were a great help in designing his own. The fluttering ribbon adopted in the backs of chairs occurs as a decorative accessory in a book of designs by Berain, Le Moyne and Chauveau, and is used by several of their successors; and Boucher, Ranson and Lalond's book is a treasure-house of details for ornate beds and sofas. When, therefore, Chippendale says: "In executing many of the drawings, my pencil has but faintly copied out these images that my fancy suggested," he assumes more originality than he is justly entitled to.

Carving was of supreme importance at this period. One of the early English books on furniture was published in 1739 by William Jones, an architect. The carver is the workman that he had chiefly in mind, the designs being for chimney-pieces, slab-tables, pier-glasses, tabernacle-frames, ceilings, etc. The same remark applies to Mathias Lock's *New Book of Ornaments* (London, 1752), and to several similar books that appeared before 1760 by Lairese, Halfpenny, Swan, Edwards and Darly, Thomas



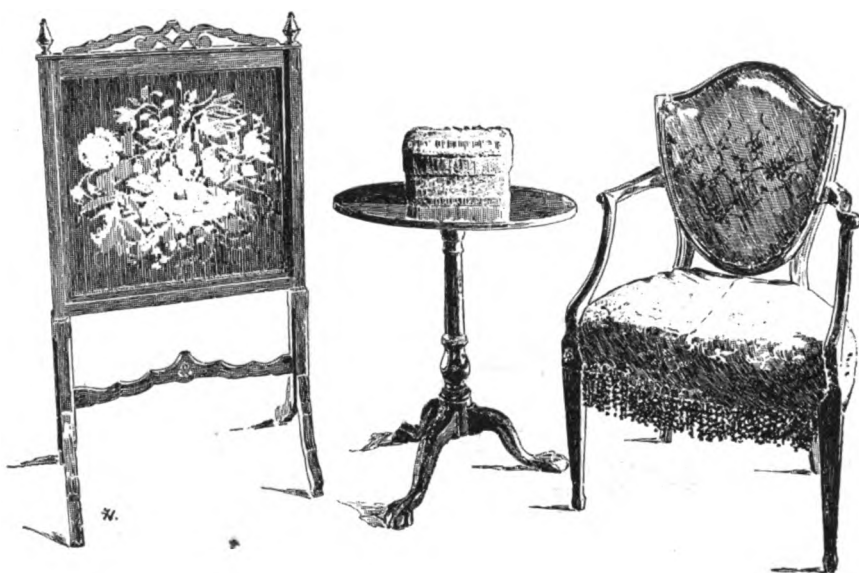
MIRRORS

*From the South Kensington Museum. See page 458.*

12  
1914  
J. B. LEECH AND  
S. H. HARRIS, JR.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Johnson, William Jones and A. Rossis. Lairesse, Lock and Johnson were carvers only. We have already seen that able carvers of this school came to the colonies. A notice of an elaborate piece of wood-carving by one of these appears in the *Maryland Gazette* for January 7, 1762. It is worth quoting here:



SCREEN, TABLE THAT BELONGED TO REBECCA MOTTE, AND CHAIR  
Owned by Miss Susan Pringle, Charleston, S. C. See page 472.

“Last month died here, Mr. Henry Crouch, Carver, who was deemed by good judges to be as ingenious an artist at his business as any in the king’s dominions. Some months before he died, he employed himself in cutting or raising out of the solid wood, a number of figures to put over a mantle piece. In the centre, sits Britannia on a pedestal (to which hangs a medal with the bust of Mr. Pitt) amid the trophies of war, with a sceptre in one of her hands, and an olive branch

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

in the other ; on her right, in a prostrate posture, is a female figure representing France, offering a scroll at the feet of Britannia ; a little further off lies a figure representing Envy, struck dead by Jupiter, who sits above with a pair of scales in his hand ; on the same side is Ceres with the Cornucopia pouring out her plenty to Britannia ; Fame with her trumpet ; and several other curious figures. On the left of Britannia, is Victory introducing Peace ; Minerva ; Fortitude ; Neptune ; Mercury ; and sundry other figures ; old Time above, with a scythe in one hand and a pair of callipers in the other, measuring the globe. It has a neat carved border, and canopy at top, with curtains folded. The whole executed in so masterly a taste, and with such symmetry of parts, that it would be an ornament even in a palace. And although Mr. Crouch had very little notice taken of him, and lived somewhat obscurely, yet it must be allowed, that He Cut A Good Figure In Life."

The question now arises: "What is Chippendale furniture?" Judging from his own text, he scarcely made any use of mahogany. That wood is mentioned only once: "Six designs of chairs for halls, passages or summer-houses. They may be made either of mahogany, *or any other wood, and painted,* and have commonly wooden seats." Marquetry, or any enrichment by inlaying or painting, is never used: Chippendale takes no more notice of it than if it had never existed. For his effects, he depends entirely on the beauty of tapestry and other coverings and drapery, bright metal mounts, and, above all, carving and gilding. The amount of skilled labour required in the execution of the designs in his book naturally rendered that class of furniture very expensive, and therefore within the means of the rich only. Consequently, relatively little of such ornate work was ever

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

produced ; it was all made to order, and it is doubtful if a single piece after these designs that issued from Chippendale's workshop ever crossed the Atlantic. It would be an error, however, to assume that he confined his labours to furniture of such florid ornamentation. The mere fact that he had supplied several members of the aristocracy with chairs and beds of his own design shows that he was a cabinet-maker of some standing and had worked up a prosperous business. The furniture that he had been making for many years, in common with many others of his craft, was so well known that there would have been no novelty in including those designs in his book : he could not claim any credit from existing styles. His originality lies in the elaboration of those models ; and yet posterity calls nearly all the developments of Queen Anne styles by his name. He probably continued making the old furniture for customers of moderate means until the end of his life. In South Kensington Museum, there are heavy chairs with the strongly accented cabriole curves in the legs, and plain club, hoof, or ball-and-claw feet, sometimes entirely destitute of carving, that are attributed to all dates up to 1780. Not a single table or chair in his book shows the legs or feet that occur so often among our illustrations and are considered as so distinctly "Chippendale." Feet like those on pages 276 and 277 never occur in his book ; and the ball-and-claw is only found once, and that is on a tea-caddy which is of such little importance as to be ignored in his notes and descriptions of the plates. The lion's paw on a flattened bulb or pad appears on a desk and book-case, a bed, and a "French" chair. It is noticeable, however, that all these plates are dated 1753 and are therefore among his earliest. The only hoof-feet figured are those of a goat



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

that terminate the legs of a toilet-table, and in this case there is a reason for their presence, since satyrs are carved on the cabriole curves above. When, therefore, writers tell



**FIELD BED**

Owned by Stephen Girard, now in Girard College, Philadelphia. See page 472.

us that Chippendale was especially fond of the ball-and-claw foot, it is plain that they have in mind the general furniture of the day that he and his contemporaries made for the multitude, and not the especial furniture of French ornamentation that he wanted to make for the fashionable world.



**BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY**

*Owned by Miss Jessie Colby, New York. See page 459.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

On looking through the first edition of Chippendale's book, we cannot fail to notice the preponderance of Chinese and Gothic designs. There are no less than twenty-eight of the former and twenty of the latter so designated, and, in addition to these, we find two Gothic library book-cases and three Gothic sideboard tables. Four hanging-shelves and several "China shelves," candle stands and fire-screens are distinctly Chinese, as is also a "library case and book-case," while a number of "gerandoles," pier-glass frames and "frames for marble slabs" (console-tables) are adorned with whimsical Chinese ornaments and figures. Gothic and Chinese cornices also appear. The fret, Gothic or Chinese, and sometimes a mixture of both styles, occurs as a border upon tea-trays, tables, bookcases, chests-of-drawers, dressing-cases, cabinets, clothes-chests, hanging-selves, clock-cases, fire-screens, etc., etc.

The student must keep in mind the fact that Chippendale does not attempt to give illustrations of the ordinary styles of furniture that he and others were making. If we were to try to form any idea of contemporary furniture by his book alone, we should say that he knew nothing of Windsor chairs, or round-about chairs, or arm-chairs, or wing-chairs, or rocking-chairs, or foot-stools, or washstands, or knife-boxes, or dining-tables, or corner cupboards, or work-tables, or dumb-waiters, or cradles, or press-bedsteads, or spinets. We should say that turned work was unknown; that the chairs never had horizontal bars in the backs, either plain or pierced; that they never had shaped unpierced splats; that stretchers were of very rare occurrence; and that the furniture was never inlaid, but carved with Gothic, Chinese and Louis Quinze ornaments exclusively. We cannot help regretting that he did not give us exam-

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ples of what was already in fashion, instead of what he would like to introduce. In France, the works of Boucher *fils* and Neufforge give an exact idea of the interiors of their day; they represent the singular forms of the Louis Quinze period, and are not the rich and excessively ornate style found in Salembier, Cauvet and others. It is only Chippendale's chairs, however, that retain much semblance to their parent stock, and it is precisely because he restrained his exuberance to some extent and retained the general outlines that had gradually developed, that they have endured, while his Gothic and Chinese novelties and extravagances were soon forgotten. His patterns are all developments of the crown-back and the "embowed" or bow-topped chair (see pages 276 and 337). He paid great attention to the proportion between the splat and the open spaces on either side (the outlines of the splat keeping somewhat closely to the old jar form), and then pierced the splat in various patterns of tracery which he still further enriched with ornamental carving. In his designs, the old cabriole curves and heaviness of the legs are greatly reduced, and the general effect is one of much greater lightness than most of our illustrations. Most of the latter belong to the school from which his own were developed, and to his own early period. The designs in the back of the "Chippendale" chair are innumerable, though they all have a family likeness. Of those that appear here, the chair belonging to Miss Sherburne (see page 413) is, perhaps, the nearest in design to any in Chippendale's book.

Between the first and the third edition of Chippendale's book, works were published on the same subject by T. Johnson, Edwards and Darly, Ince and Mayhew and The Society of Upholsterers. They all give designs of

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what to-day we should call Chippendale furniture, but in his last edition the latter makes no complaint that others were copying him. Ince and Mayhew devote a number of plates to Gothic and Chinese designs for the prevailing



CHAIRS FROM THE DINING-ROOM OF THE VAN RENSSELAER MANOR  
HOUSE

Owned by Mr. William Bayard Van Rensselaer, Albany, N. Y. See page 469.

taste, and Louis Quinze ornamentation is adopted by them all.

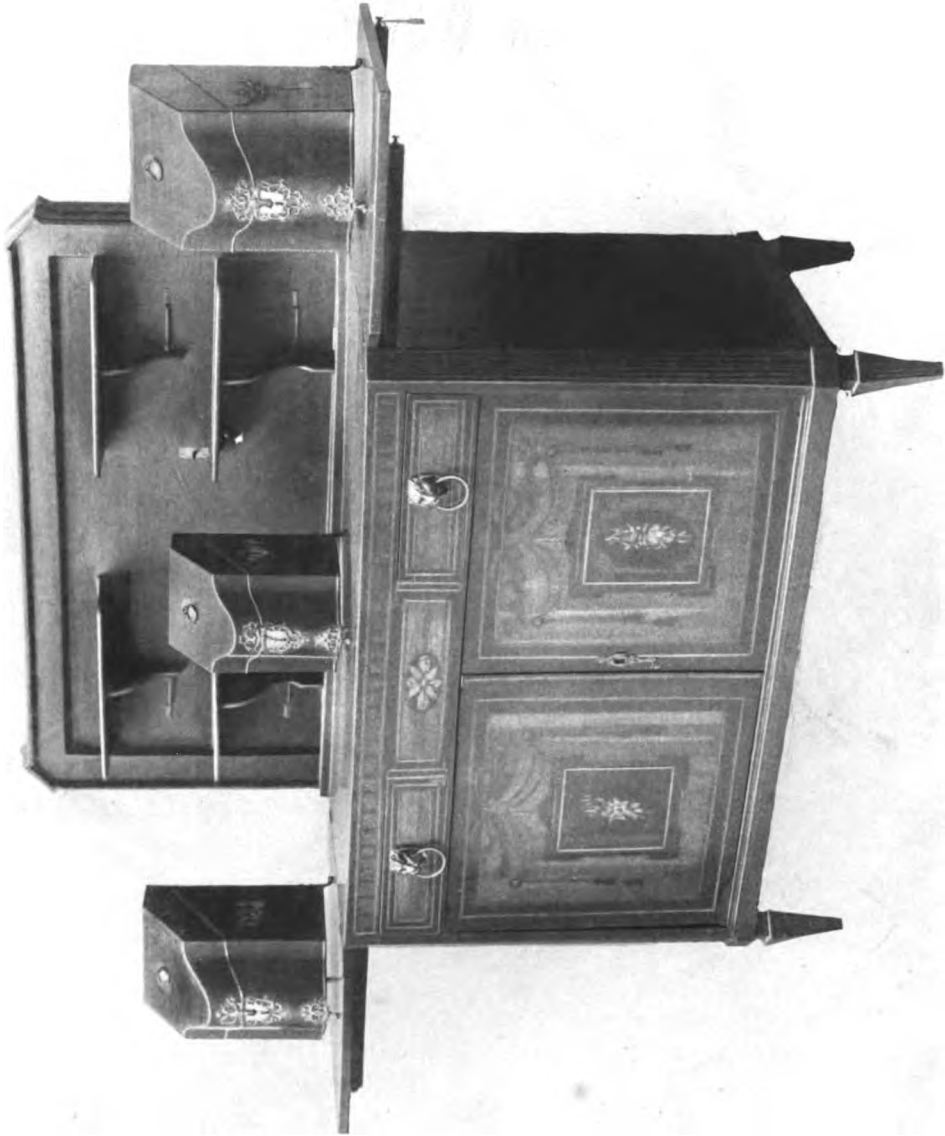
We cannot hope to find any of the furniture answering to Chippendale's published designs in this country, with the exception of his chairs and simpler forms of tables, book-cases, etc. An examination of the furniture in South Kensington that is confidently attributed to Chippendale shows

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

that it is entirely different in character to what appears in his book. Some of the varieties of mirrors made during the eighteenth century face page 450. Even the most ornate of these has much less intricate carving than Chippendale frequently designs.

A plate with three pieces of such ordinary furniture as came from Chippendale's workshop faces page 438. On the left is a mahogany square table with pierced gallery; it is supported by one baluster leg with tripod cabriole feet ending in claws and carved with the acanthus leaf ornament. It was made about 1740. In the middle is a mahogany writing-cabinet with folding flap and drawers, the interior being fitted with pigeon-holes and receptacles for writing materials. It is supported by four cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet carved with the acanthus leaf and mounted with brass lock-plates, handles and escutcheons. It was made about 1750. It will be noticed that here, as in most cases, Chippendale has introduced no new form. The Museum possesses a similar writing-case of the Anglo-Dutch school of about 1700. It is almost identical with that belonging to William Penn facing page 82. The third piece is a mahogany table. It is eight-foil in shape, with a raised and moulded edge, and is carved in the centre with a leaf, floral and diaper ornament. Like the other table, it is supported by one baluster leg with tripod cabriole feet ending in ball-and-claws, and ornamented with carved acanthus. It was made before 1750. A somewhat similar table is in possession of Mr. H. E. Bowles of Boston.

A handsome bookcase and secretary of this period, belonging to Miss Sherburne, Warner House, Portsmouth, N. H., faces page 432. When let down, the leaf forms a



**INLAID SIDEBOARD**  
*Originally owned by Robert Morris; now in Memorial Hall, Philadelphia. See page 484.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

writing slab that is lower than usual. The little pillars in the front conceal the usual secret receptacles. This is a beautifully proportioned piece of furniture with handsome brasses and a band of carving below the cornice. Another mahogany bookcase and secretary, belonging to Miss Jessie Colby, New York, faces page 454. The doors of the bookcase have characteristic Gothic window tracery and the pigeon holes have Gothic outlines, while the pediment is Classic and the feet are carved. When closed, the bureau looks like a chest with four drawers. The little knobs of the interior drawers are of ivory and the light facing is of satin-wood. The Heppelwhite chair standing beside it gives an idea of the unusual height of this piece.

Three characteristic Chippendale pieces from the Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, face page 448. In the centre is a mahogany lamp-stand with a hexagonal top surrounded by a carved and pierced gallery. The height of the supporting column is 3 feet  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches, the spread of the tripod ball-and-claw feet 20 inches, and the diameter of the top  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The small mahogany tea-kettle stand to the left is of the same period. The octagonal top with a raised edge is 16 inches in diameter. It is only 24 inches high. On the same plate is a handsome Chippendale mahogany settee, belonging to Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe of Hartford. It is in the form of a double armchair with moulded and carved backs terminating in scrolls and open-work back panels carved. South Kensington possesses several pieces of this character attributed to dates between 1750 and 1770.

A settee of very similar character faces page 434. It originally belonged to John Hancock and is now in the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

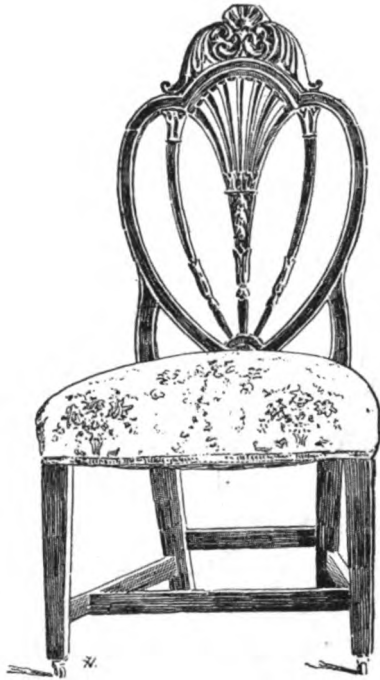
Mass. The carved heads that terminate the arms are almost identical with those on the chair on page 65. They may also be compared with the carved Chinese chair facing page 424. The frame is of walnut. The mahogany articles on the plate facing page 440 also belong to Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe of Hartford. To the left is a table with shaped top and turned baluster supported by three "snake feet;" the centre table is carved with a coat-of-arms, the initials M. E. and the date 1748. To the right is a tea-kettle stand with pierced gallery and carved cabriole ball-and-claw feet. These tables are all small, and good specimens of Chippendale's ordinary work.

Most of the chairs reproduced in this part are of the most familiar Chippendale patterns. The openwork in the backs closely resembles the designs published by Chippendale, though none are identical with those. The mahogany chair on page 420, owned by Mrs. John Bleecker Miller, New York, is interesting because of the pierced frets in the stretchers, which Chippendale would sometimes call Chinese and sometimes Gothic. The same pattern repeated in the legs is also characteristic of Chippendale chairs. The chair, however, is said to have formed part of the dowry of Cornelia Harring of Holland, who was married in 1765 to the Hon. Samuel Jones, Recorder of New York.

The corner, or round-about, chair has already been illustrated. The semi-circular back consisting of a top rail, supported by three turned columns and ornamentally pierced panels, and square seat with movable stuffed cushion is often found; but it is quite unusual to find the back raised another stage to form a more comfortable big armchair, as in the exceedingly fine example owned by Mr. Walter Hosmer in Wethersfield, Conn. (See page 439.)

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

On page 435 are four chairs from the South Kensington Museum. The one on the extreme right is a Sheraton model ; the two in the centre are characteristic Chippendales. The chair next to the Sheraton is of mahogany,



MAHOGANY CHAIR

Owned by Dr. George Ross, Richmond, Va. See page 471.

the back having a central support carved with floral and leaf ornament and pierced ; the front legs and outside bars of the back are fluted, the front legs being of square section and the back legs are curved and joined to the front by cross bars. The seat is covered with red leather held by brass studs. This is said to be in Chippendale's style late in the century. To the left is one of the earlier design. The arms are lower and the model is less elegant ; but

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

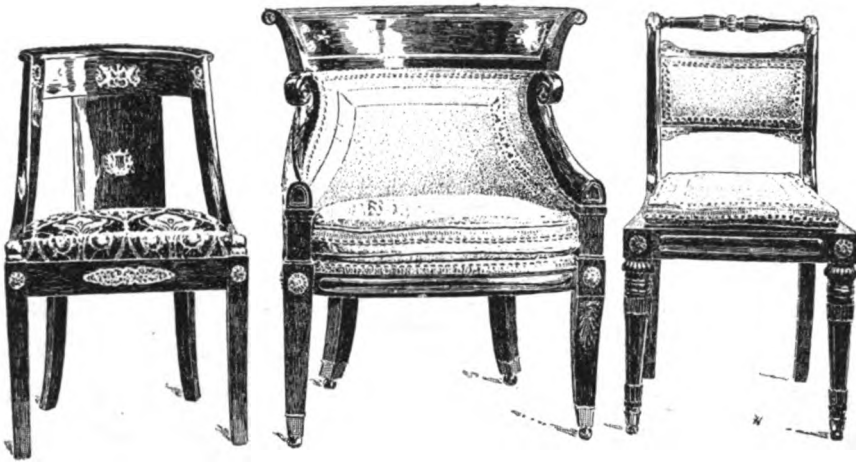
neither of these shows Chippendale at his best, for the proportion of open spaces on either side of the splat shows lack of the taste usually displayed. A model which does not appear in Chippendale's book, but which is always attributed to him, is illustrated on page 433. It is of mahogany with an open back consisting of moulded sides, pierced wavy top rail, and three horizontal back bars of similar shape and piercing. It has square, tapering front legs, curved back legs and plain stretchers. The date is about 1750. The four-back chair, of which this is a development, at a very early date had inlaid patterns similar to the piercing in this example. This belonged to the Visscher family of Albany. The table is a Heppelwhite, the legs being inlaid with the favourite *chute* of the bell-flower in satin-wood. This was owned by the Ten Eyck family. Both pieces belong to Miss Ten Eyck in Albany.

On page 429 are three chairs. The centre one is a good model of Chippendale's best style, showing well-proportioned light and dark spaces. The chairs on either side, which belonged to the Fletcher family, are also frequently called Chippendale models, but they more properly belong to the Sheraton school, for it is well known that Chippendale abhorred the straight line and generally waved the tops of his chairs.

A handsomely carved chair, said to have come from Hampton Court Palace and now in possession of Mr. Charles R. Waters of Salem, Mass., appears on page 423. The centre panel is carved and pierced with a complex knot, rosette and frill. The top rail is bow-shaped with a carved centre and leaf-scroll ends. There is a chair with a splat identical with this in South Kensington. The date given is about 1740.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Two mahogany chairs on page 417 belong to Mrs. Wainwright in Hartford, Conn. The one on the left is early, the shell being carved in the centre of the front rail, as in so many of the early cases of drawers. The tracery in the splat is similar to a model in South Kensington dated 1732. The difference in the curves of the arms of these two chairs is worth notice. The second one is simi-



ADAM CHAIRS

Owned by the Duke of Devonshire. See page 469.

lar to models dated about 1750. The tracery of the chair on the left, consisting of intersecting bands, should also be compared with two mahogany chairs owned by Stephen Girard, reproduced on page 414.

Other chairs, with the pattern consisting of bands interlacing a hollow diamond, are on page 427. These originally belonged to Philip Van Rensselaer, and are now owned by Mrs. Edward Rankin at *Cherry Hill*, Albany, N. Y. Another chair almost identical with these is on page 409. It is from the Glen-Sanders House, Scotia, New York.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Other variants of these patterns appear on pages 444 and 447, showing chairs of the period. The first belongs to Mr. Stephen Schuyler, Troy Road, N. Y.; the second to Prof. Henry P. Archer, of Charleston, S. C. This is similar to the chairs already represented on page 148.

Two other Chippendale chairs appear with a sideboard facing page 480. The backs are almost square and the splat is pierced vertically. The South Kensington authorities date this model about 1740.

The sideboard, facing page 480, belongs to George Dagworthy Mayo, Esq., of Richmond, Va., and has been in the Mayo family for six generations. It is of mahogany inlaid with various coloured woods.

In 1773, appeared *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, in the preface of which we read: "The novelty and variety of the following designs will not only excuse but justify our conduct in communicating them to the world. We have not trod in the path of others, nor derived aid from their labours. In the works which we have had the honour to execute, we have not only met with the approbation of our employers, but even with the imitation of other artists, to such a degree, as in some measure to have brought about, in this country, a kind of revolution in the whole system of this useful and elegant art.

"To enter upon an enquiry into the state of this art in Great Britain, till the late changes it has undergone, is no part of our present design. . . . If we have any claim to approbation, we found it on this alone: That we have been able to seize, with some degree of success, the beautiful spirit of antiquity, and to transfuse it with novelty and variety, through all our numerous works."

The Adam brothers were great admirers of the French

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

architecture, and in their book they pay a special tribute to it.

While not corresponding precisely with the Louis XVI. style, the Adam style is similar in many respects. The



HEPPELWHITE CHAIR

In the house of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. See page 471.

straight line, the arabesque scrollwork, the resplendent use of *ormoulu*, the gaiety and lightness, and the formality are common to both.

It has been aptly said that the essence of the Adam style is "simplicity, elegant slenderness, and low relief." The urn is a singularly important ornament and the urn shape is seen everywhere. Other favourite details of ornamentation are the bell-flower or husk appearing on the

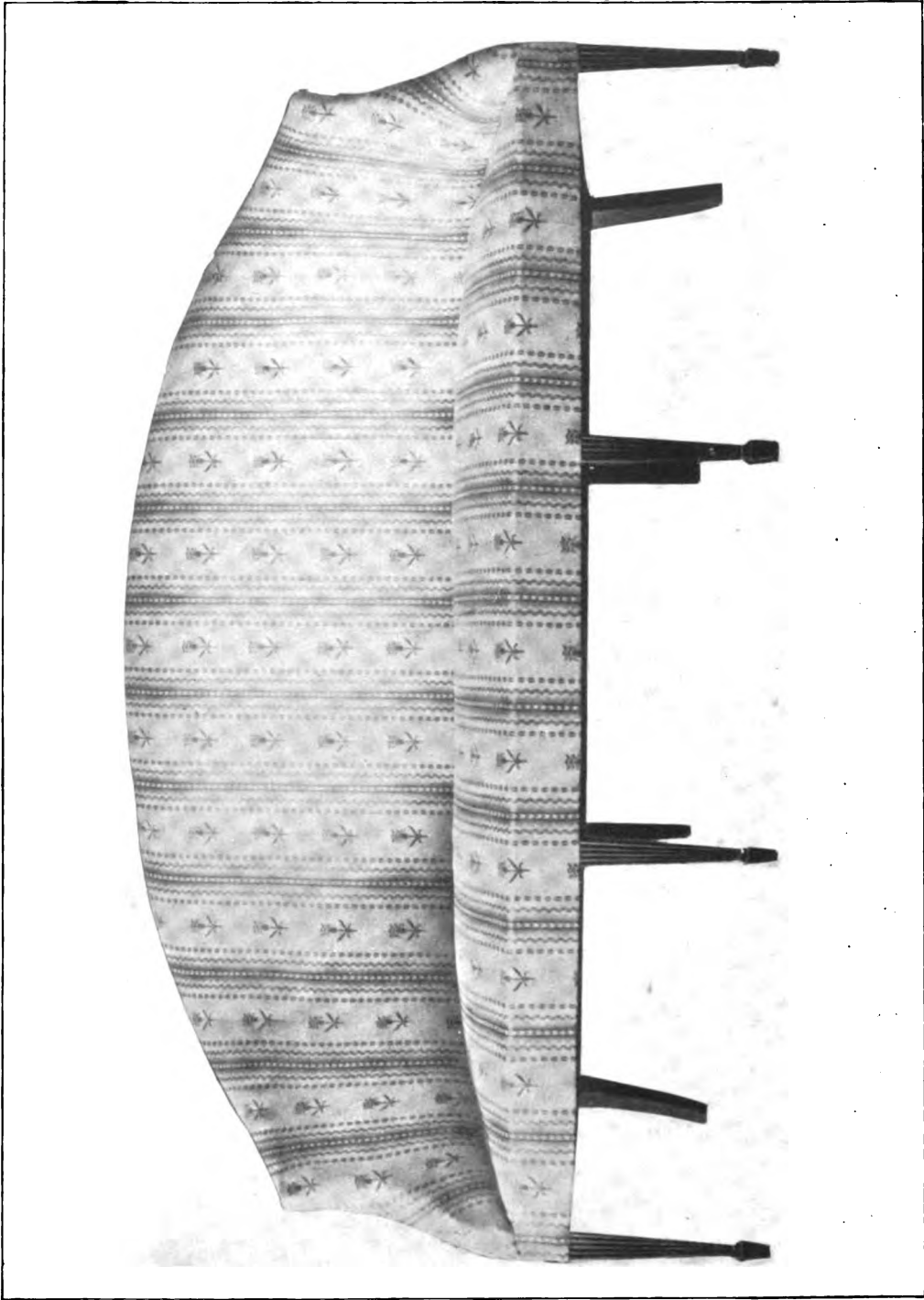


## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

legs of furniture and frequently looped in festoons around girondelles, tripods, or in panels and ceilings; delicate scrolls; swags of drapery; the fluted shell; ovals and circular medallions containing paintings; *pateræ*, or rosettes; the ram's head; trophies; fans; Greek and Roman vases; wreaths; the honeysuckle; musical instruments; loops and bows of ribbon; the acanthus; the sunflower; Greek borders; goats; centaurs; fawns; caryatides; sea-horses; griffins; sphinxes; dolphins; and figures half-human, half-foliage. Sometimes Adam employed heraldic devices in his ornamentation, to please the family who had ordered the work; for example, the deer's head is used for Lord Mansfield. He is also fond of lions' and eagles' claws for feet.

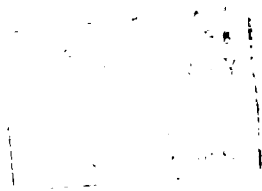
The Adam furniture was very rich and costly. It was cold, formal, and ornate, although colour played no little part in the scheme. Lord Derby's "great withdrawing-room" is described by the designers as follows: "The ornaments of the ceiling and entablature are chiefly of stucco gilt, with a mixture of paintings. The grounds are covered with various tints. The frames for glasses, the pedestals and vases in the niches, and the girondelles on the piers, are of wood gilt. This room is hung with satin, and is undoubtedly one of the most elegant in Europe, whether we consider the variety or the richness of its decorations." The chimney-piece in this room was of "statuary marble, inlaid with various coloured *scagliola* and brass ornaments, gilt in *ormoulu*. The glass frame over it is carved in wood and gilt."

The ornaments of the ceiling in the Countess of Derby's dressing-room were partly in stucco and "partly painting, the colouring of the Etruscans." An ornate commode was also designed for this room in harmony with the wall decorations.



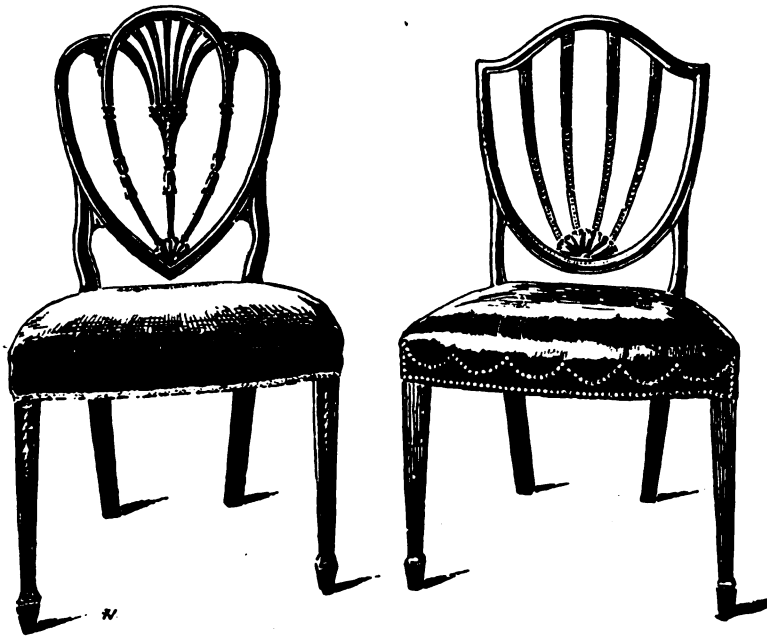
**HEPPELWHITE SOFA**

*Said to have belonged to Baron Steuben; now owned by Mrs. John Stebbins, Cazenovia, N. Y. See page 472.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

It is certain that the Adam brothers *made* no furniture, although they designed sofas, chairs, tables, sideboard tables, etc., etc. They even went so far, in their wish to make the room in perfect harmony, as to design the locks and handles for the doors. The vase and urn not only appear



HEPPELWHITE CHAIRS BELONGING TO THE TEN BROECK AND  
GLEN-SANDERS FAMILIES

Now owned by Dr. Herman T. Mynderse, Schenectady, N. Y. See page 471.

as motives of decoration, but the Adams were fond of hollowing out niches to contain pedestals bearing vases, which they also designed.

They also give "a design of a glass frame and commode table; upon which is placed a clock and vases, with branches for candles. These were executed for us in wood gilt, except the vases, which were of silver." Here the vases are urns standing upon griffins that sit back to back.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The mirror is in two pieces, and ornamented across the join with griffins, swinging lamps and swags of the bell-flower or husk. On the same plate are shown four other designs for candlesticks. One is a tripod six feet high, made in *ormoulu*, and decorated with ram's heads and swags of the bell-flower, supporting a vase that holds three candlesticks. Another, of the same height, carries two candles, and is decorated with the heads of women. The vase holding the candles is surmounted by a sphinx. The other two are brackets and vases holding candles. The branches of one are of the acanthus and are decorated by strings of the bell-flower caught in the mouth of a child's head in the centre of the vase; the second vase is ornamented with ram's heads and graceful festoons of grapes and grape-leaves. One of the plates shows a sideboard table which is called a buffet. It has neither back nor drawers. A wine-cooler, or cistern, stands below it, and upon it stand two knife-boxes. The silver upon it is arranged in the most formal manner. There are six wine-cups, two ewers, and four vases. The knife-boxes are open, and handsome plates stand upright upon the tops of them. Three lamps shown also in his book prove that Adam did not, however much he might condemn the taste of the past, withstand the Chinese influence. In these he has used the umbrella many times and very charmingly, and from the mouths of dolphins there hangs a string of little bells.

The Adam style spread to America, although not in its most gorgeous manifestation, but it was only natural that the wealthy Englishmen settled here temporarily or permanently should have the desire to keep up with the fashions at home. There were many of the homes in the Southern colonies that were decorated with stucco work, and we have

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

a special instance in two houses of Sir Charles Frankland. One on Garden Court Street and Bell Alley, Boston, was built in 1765.

Two mahogany chairs in the Adam style, but without the enrichment, have already appeared facing page 112. This model dates from about 1770. A similar one, from a private collection, with applied ornaments in *ormoulu*, appears with two other Adam chairs on page 463. The date of the two latter is about 1800. Two more chairs of later development of this form are given on page 457. They are from the Van Rensselaer Manor House and are owned by Mr. William Bayard Van Rensselaer, Albany, N. Y. The mahogany sofa facing page 472 has some of the Adam characteristics, especially the ram's head, the general shape of the legs (though the Adam leg is usually reeded) and the general outline of the frame. This piece is said to have belonged to Robert Morris and is now owned by the Misses Comegys, Philadelphia.

*The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, by A. Hoppelwhite & Co. (1788), is the next work that claims attention. The authors say in their preface :

“ We have exerted our utmost endeavours to produce a work which shall be useful to the mechanic and serviceable to the gentleman. With this view, after having fixed upon such articles as were necessary to a complete suit of furniture, our judgment was called forth in selecting such patterns as were most likely to be of general use and convey a just idea of English taste in furniture.

“ English taste and workmanship have, of late years, been much sought for by surrounding nations ; and the mutability of all things, but more especially of fashions, has rendered the labour of our predecessors in this line of little

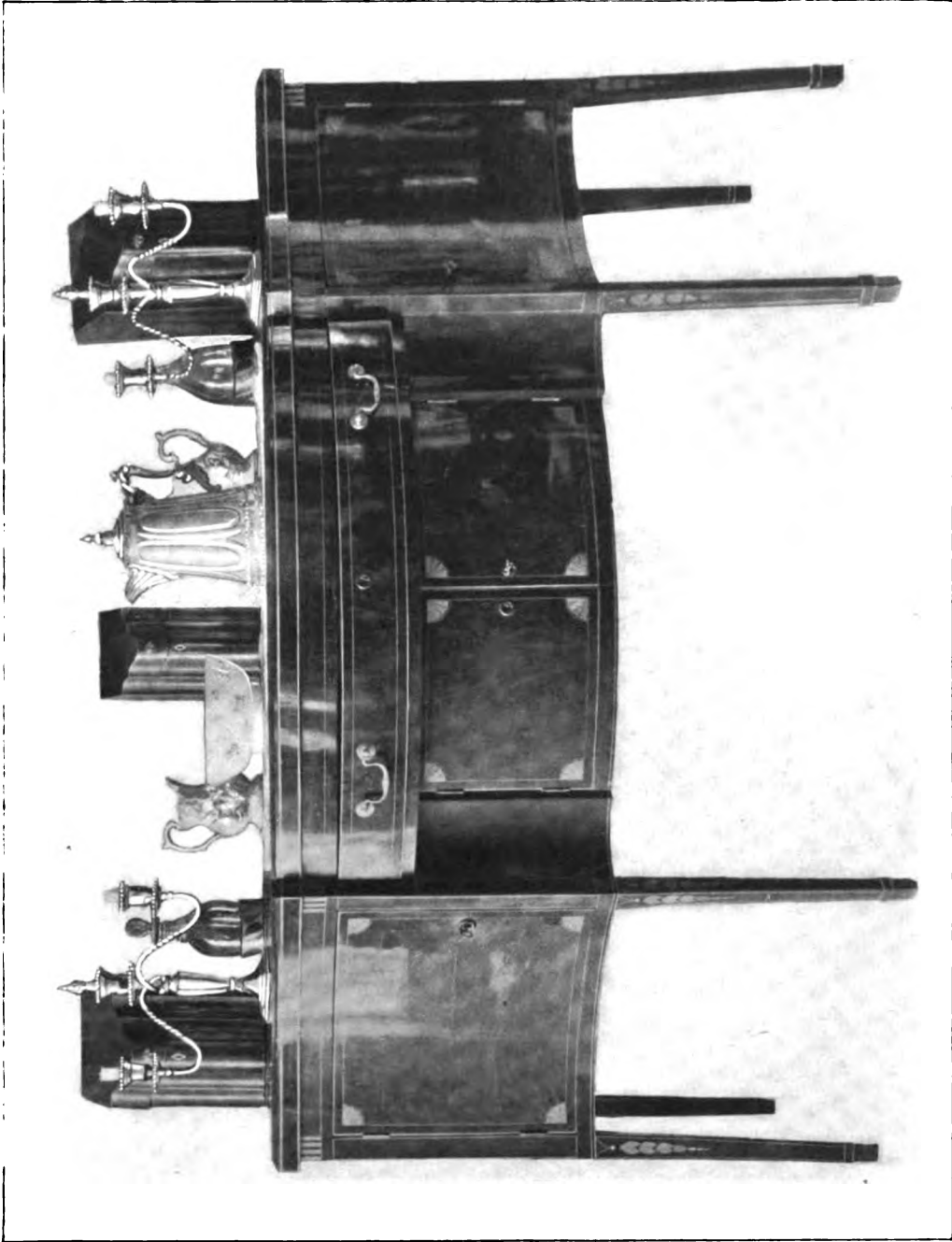
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

use; nay, at this day, they can only tend to mislead those foreigners, who seek a knowledge of English taste in the various articles of household furniture.

“The same reason in favour of this work, will apply also to many of our own Countrymen and Artizans, whose distance from the metropolis makes even an imperfect knowledge of its improvements acquired with much trouble and expense. Our labours will, we hope, tend to remove this difficulty; and as our ideas of the useful was such articles as are generally serviceable in genteel life, we flatter ourselves the labour and pains we have bestowed on this work will not be considered as time uselessly spent.

“To Residents in London, though our drawings are all new, yet, as we designedly followed the latest or most prevailing fashions only, purposely omitting such articles, whose recommendation was mere novelty, and perhaps a violation of all established rule, and steadily adhered to such articles only as are of general use and service, one principle hope for favour and encouragement will be, in having combined near three hundred different patterns for furniture in a small space, and at a small price. In this instance we hope for reward; and though we lay no claim to extraordinary merit in our designs, we flatter ourselves they will be found serviceable to young workmen in general, and occasionally to more experienced ones.”

It will be noticed that Heppelwhite claims very little originality for himself, or rather for his firm; that the designs selected conform to, or accord with, the taste of the hour; that the productions of his predecessors have passed entirely out of fashion; and that there has been a demand for English furniture in other countries for several years.



**HEPPELWHITE SIDEBOARD**

*Owned by General Ten Broeck; now owned by his descendant, Dr. Herman V. Mynderse, Schenectady, N. Y. See page 474.*



1904  
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ANNALS OF THE  
ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

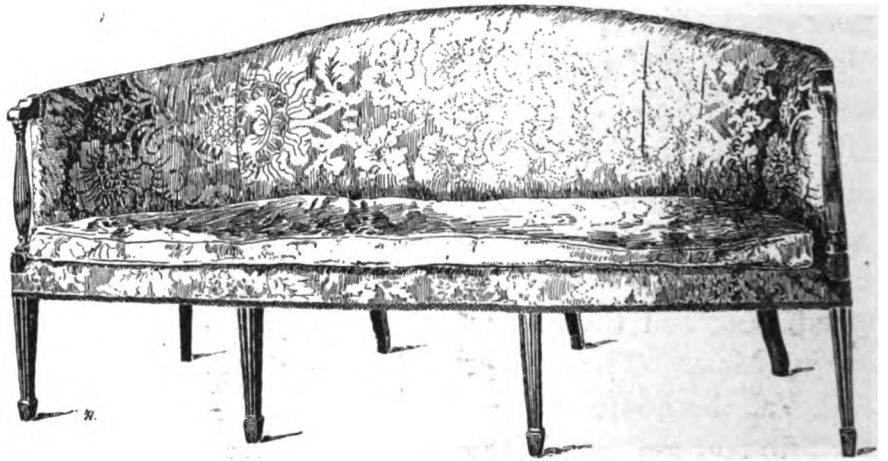
The first thing that strikes our attention, on examining his plates, is that the straight line has taken the place of the curve, especially in the leg of the chair and table, and that there is a general feeling of slenderness in many of the patterns. The only time the claw-foot appears is on the foot of a bed pillar, and it is very roughly carved. The ball never occurs. The chair, the sofa and the sideboard seem to have been Heppelwhite's especial delight. He has a special fondness for shaping the back of his chairs like a shield and placing a pierced splat in the centre, or several horizontal and curved bars. These he calls "banister-back chairs," typical specimens of which appear on page 467. These belong to Dr. Herman V. Mynderse, Schenectady, N. Y. Other chairs appear on pages 461 and 465. The first belongs to Dr. George Ross, Richmond, Va., and the second to Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. The former chair came from *Powhatan's Seat*, Va., the home of the Mayos.

The legs are usually the tapering "term;" are sometimes fluted and sometimes inlaid half-way down with the husk or bell-flower, and most frequently end in the term or "spade foot." The covering, whether of silk, linen, or leather, is fastened over the front rail by one or two rows of evenly studded brass nails, and upon the back of the chair appear such ornaments as the urn, with or without drapery, the lotus, the bell-flower, the acanthus, the rosette, the shell, and very often three feathers out of compliment to the Prince of Wales. Chairs with stuffed backs he calls "cabriole chairs" and two of the designs "have been executed with good effect for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The enrichments may be either carved, carved and gilt, or japanned." His stuffed chairs have, as a rule,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

very short arms, and sometimes the backs are surmounted by the famous three feathers, an urn, or a bow of ribbon.

A typical Heppelwhite stuffed chair appears on page 451 with a table that belonged to Rebecca Motte, a Revolutionary heroine of South Carolina, and a fire-screen of this period. These pieces are owned by Miss Susan Pringle, Charleston, S. C. A "Field bed" with one of Hep-



SOFA

Belonged to Samuel Barron, now in the rooms of the Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass. See below.

pelwhite's characteristic "sweeps" is reproduced on page 454. It was owned by Stephen Girard and is now in Girard College, Philadelphia.

A sofa with mixed Heppelwhite and Sheraton characteristics appears on this page. It was probably made by a native cabinet-maker, and belonged to Samuel Barron. It is now in the rooms of the Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass. An interesting sofa faces page 466. It was bought by Perry G. Childs, Esq., at the sale of Colonel Benjamin Walker's effects in Utica soon after his death in 1818. It is said to have belonged to Baron Steuben, the Revolution-



**MAHOGANY SOFA**

*Said to have belonged to Robert Morris; now owned by the Misses Comegys, Philadelphia, Pa. See page 469.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ary hero, on whose staff Colonel Walker served, and one of whose executors he was. It is now owned by Mr. Child's grand-daughter, Mrs. John Stebbins, who owns and occupies his old home, *Willowbank*, Cazenovia, N. Y.



TWO CHAIRS AND A LETTER-CASE

Owned by Miss Anne Van Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y. See page 484.

His Confidante and Duchesse sofas, desks and book-cases, tables and beds, will be dealt with in the last chapter of this book. We must mention here, however, the side-board, which is no longer a table, but has developed into a piece of furniture with drawers and compartments. "The great utility of this piece of furniture," Heppelwhite remarks, "has procured it a very general reception; and the conveniences it affords render a dining-room in-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

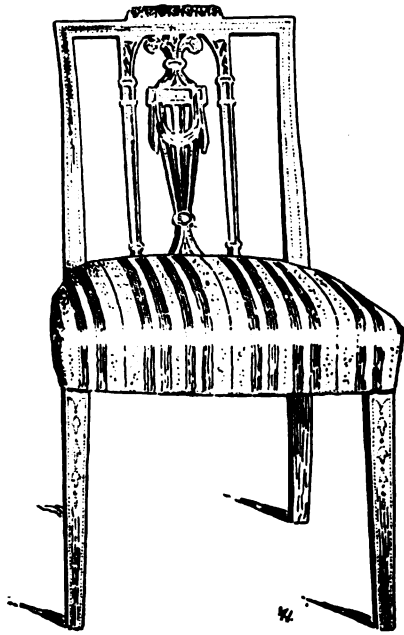
complete without a sideboard." He gives several designs showing their internal construction, with compartments for wine bottles and drawers for cloth and napkins. In one he has a drawer "lined with green cloth to hold plate, etc., under a cover"; and another, lined with lead for the convenience of holding water to wash glasses, etc. "There must be a valve cock or plug at the bottom to let off the dirty water; and also in the other drawer, to change the water necessary to keep the wine, etc., cool; or they may be made to take out." The Heppelwhite sideboard stands on tapering legs and has a serpentine front. Its ornaments are carved, painted or inlaid in variously coloured woods, and the designs are rosettes, urns, wreaths, and the husk or bell-flower. "They are often made," he says, "to fit into a recess; but the general custom is to make them from 5½ to 7 feet long, 3 feet high, and from 28 to 32 inches wide."

A handsome sideboard of the Heppelwhite school faces page 470. This, as well as the knife-boxes upon it, belonged to Gen. Samuel Ten Broeck (1745-1821), and was in the *Calendar House* at Clermont, N. Y. These pieces are now owned by his descendants, Dr. Herman V. Mynderse, Mr. William Livingston Mynderse, and Miss Helen Livingston Mynderse, in Schenectady, N. Y. The sideboard is mahogany inlaid with satin-wood ornaments, consisting of the husk, or bell-flower, on the legs, and the shell-fluting in the corners of the doors. The foot is the "term" or "spade" of which Heppelwhite was so fond.

He also gives sideboards without drawers, and when these are used in spacious dining-rooms they are accompanied by pedestals and vases, one being placed at each end of the sideboard. One pedestal, lined with tin, serves as a

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

plate-warmer, being provided with racks and a stand for a heater. The other pedestal is a pot-cupboard. "The vases may be used to hold water for the use of the butler, or iced water for drinking, which is inclosed in an inner par-



SHERATON CHAIR

Owned by the Colonial Dames, Baltimore, Md. See page 484.

tition, the ice surrounding it; or may be used as knife-cases, in which case they are made of wood, carved, painted or inlaid; if used for water, may be made of wood or copper japanned. The height of the pedestal is the same as the sideboard, and 16 or 18 inches square; the height of the vase about 2 feet 3 inches."

Where sideboards are without drawers, the cellarets, or *gardes de vin*, appear. "These are made of mahogany, and hooped with brass lacquered; the inner part is divided



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

with partitions and lined with lead for bottles; may be made of any shape." Upon Heppelwhite's sideboard, the knife-case was always present, "made of mahogany, satin or other wood at pleasure." "Vase knife cases" (of the shape that faces page 130) are "usually made of satin or other light-coloured wood, and may be placed at each end on the sideboard, or on a pedestal; the knives, etc., fall into the body of the vase, the top of which is kept up by a small spring which is fixed to the stem which supports the top; may be made of copper painted and japanned."

Tea-chests, tea-caddies, urn-stands, brackets, terms for busts, cornices, girandoles, reading-stands, shaving-stands, hanging-shelves, and bed pillars, all come in for their share of attention in Heppelwhite's book.

Heppelwhite lasted but three years, for we have already seen on page 436 that Sheraton says in his preface that that cabinet-maker had "caught the decline" of popular taste. *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book* appeared in 1791. Previous to this, he had published eighty-four *Designs for Furniture* which are undated, but they are thought to have been issued about 1790, when he settled in Soho, London. He also published *The Cabinet Dictionary* (1803) and *The Cabinet-Maker, Upholsterer, and General Artist's Encyclopædia* (1804-7).

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1806, we read: "In Broad Street, Soho, after a few days' illness of a phrenitis, aged 55, Mr. Thomas Sheraton, a native of Stockton-upon-Tees, and for many years a journeyman cabinet-maker, but who, since about the year 1793, has supported himself, a wife, and children, by his exertions as an author. In 1793, he published a work in two volumes, 4to, intitled *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book*, to which

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

is prefixed a numerous list of subscribers, including almost all the principal cabinet-makers in town and country. Since that time he has published 30 numbers in folio, of a work intended to be completed in 125 numbers, entitled *The Cabinet-Maker and Artist's Encyclopædia*, of which he sold nearly a thousand copies. In order to increase the number of subscribers to this work, he had lately visited Ireland, where he obtained the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant, the Marchioness of Donegal, and other distinguished persons. He was a very honest, well-disposed man, of an acute and enterprising disposition; but, like many other self-taught authors shewed the want of a regular education in his writings. He has left his family, it is feared, in distressed circumstances."

It would seem from the above that Sheraton did not make furniture after 1793, and that before that date he had to fill orders like any other ordinary workman; and that in all probability, Sheraton, like Chippendale, executed few of his own cherished designs.

The above obituary neglects to mention that Sheraton was a zealous Baptist, preached in chapels of that sect, and issued various religious publications.

In his preface, Sheraton complains that all books on cabinet-making known to him give no instructions in perspective and geometrical drawing and also omit patterns for ornaments. The first and second parts deal with geometrical lines and perspective especially for the use of the workman. The third part is devoted to designs for furniture, which "are indeed liable to change," for it is not in "the power of any man to provide against it by making such drawings as will always be thought new." Mouldings and carvings form the subject of the fourth part. From

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

his remark that the third part "is intended to exhibit the present taste of furniture, and at the same time to give the workman some assistance in the manufacture of it," we may infer that he is not as anxious to place his own designs upon the market as he is to exhibit the styles already in fashion.

The Sheraton style is a reaction from the rococo; in general form and treatment, it resembles the Louis XVI. furniture. It is tall and slender, with tapering "term" legs that are often fluted. His chairs have frequently a square back.

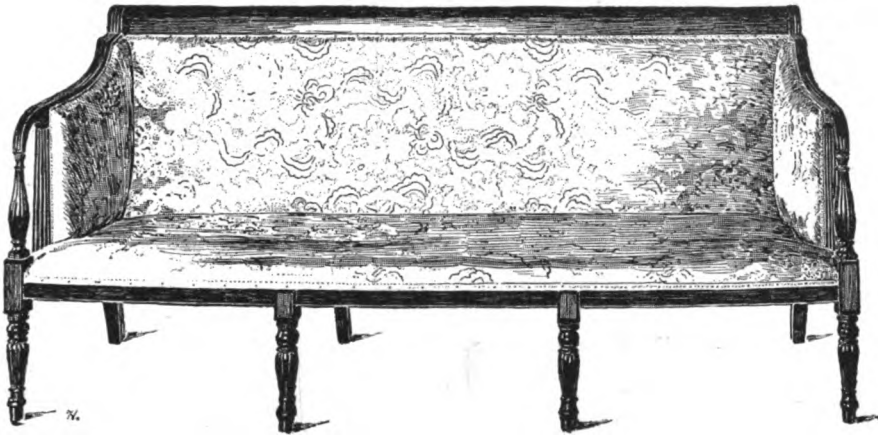
The lyre is one of his favourite ornaments, and he is also fond of the urn or vase, swags of drapery, the vase filled with flowers, columns, the husk or bell-flower which he always calls the husk, flutings, columns and the *patera*.

He likes to flute or loop green silk behind the glass doors of his bookcases and cabinets, uses a great deal of brass for trimming, and is famous for the ingenious mechanism which he introduces into his pieces. Although he uses mahogany very considerably, he is fonder of white and gold, satin-wood and japanning. His furniture is covered with silk or satin, striped, figured or woven, or painted or printed with formal designs. An excellent idea of his style may be gained from the following description of a drawing-room taken from his book.

The walls "are panelled in paper with ornamented borders of various colours"; above the windows are arches, "wooden frames put up and strained with canvas, after which the same kind of stuff which the curtains are made of is formed to appear like a fan, and drapery tacked on to it"; above the pier-glasses, square paintings completely filled the spaces between the arched windows. The fireplace is furnished with a grate and square tiles. Above it

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

is a mirror matching the pier-glasses, and above the mirror, a square picture like those over the pier-glasses. On either side of the fireplace stands a sofa, and opposite the fireplace is a commode table. Three chairs, matching the sofa, stand on either side of the commode-table, above which is a mirror and square picture like those over the



SHERATON SOFA

Owned by Edwin Forrest ; now in the collection of the Wayside Inn, Sudbury. See page 482.

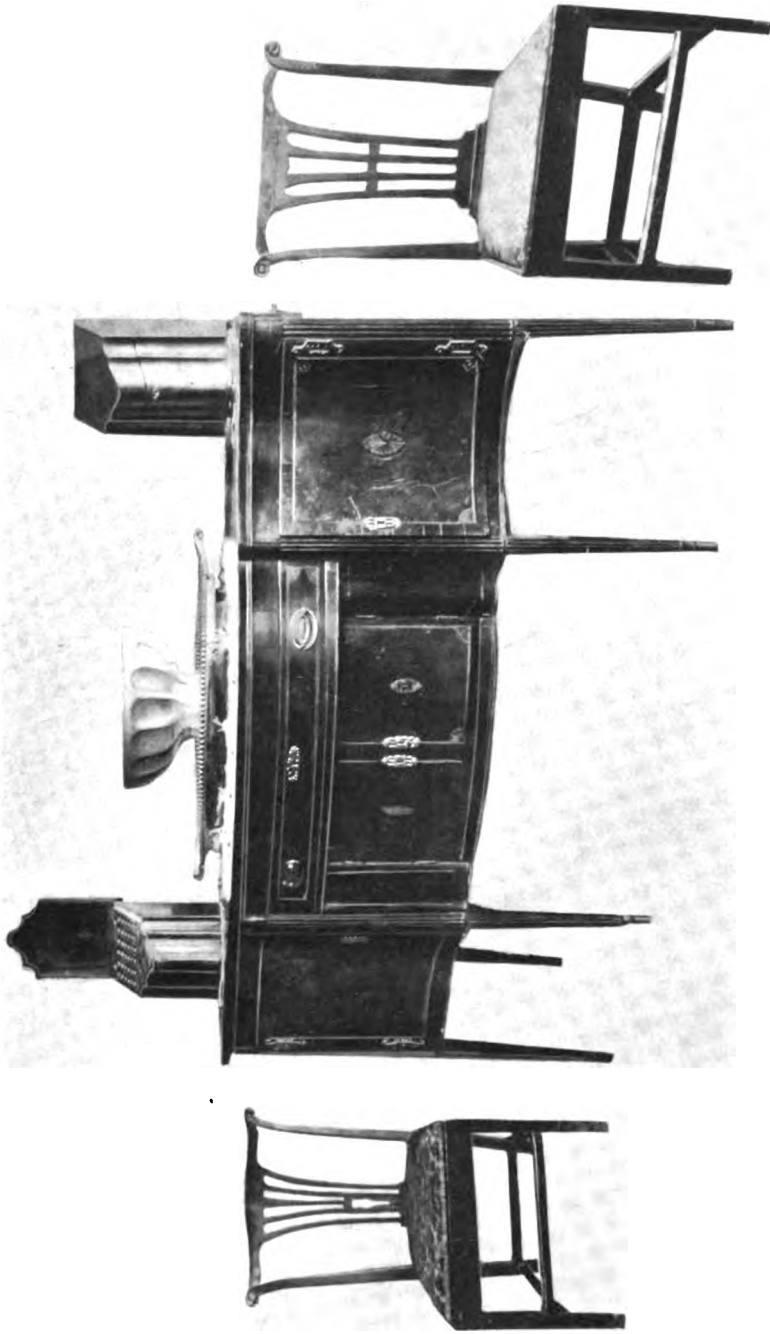
fireplace opposite. Panelled doors are on the other side of the chairs. Pier-tables with marble tops and gold, or white and gold, frames, stand between the windows, and the glasses above them appear to come down as far as the stretchers of the table, for "a piece of glass is fixed behind the pier-table, separate from the upper glass which appears to be a continuation of the same glass, and by reflection makes the table to appear double. This small piece of glass may be fixed either in the dado of the room or in the frame of the table." A single candelabrum stands upon each pier-table. "The sofas are bordered off in three

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

compartments and covered with figured silk or satin. The ovals may be printed separately and sewed on. These sofas may be cushioned to fill their backs together with bolsters at each end." The chairs match the sofas. The commode-table has four doors, and a marble top to match the pier-tables. "In the frieze part of the commode is a tablet in the centre, made of an exquisite composition in imitation of statuary marble. These are to be had of any figure, or of any subject, at Mr. Wedgewood's, near Soho Square. They are let into the wood, and project a little forward. The commode should be painted to suit the furniture, and the legs and other parts in gold, to harmonize with the sofa, tables, and chairs."

A Dining-Parlour similar to one done for the Prince of Wales in Carlton House has five windows that come to the floor and pilasters between each. A large glass is over the chimney-piece with sconces for candles. At each end of the room is a "large sideboard nearly 12 feet in length, standing between a couple of Ionic columns, worked in composition to imitate fine variegated marble. In the middle are placed a large range of dining-tables, standing on pillars with four claws each, which is now the fashionable way of making these tables. The claws are of mahogany, made in the style of the French with broad top rails hanging over each back foot; the legs are turned, and the seats covered with red leather." The curtains "are of the French kind."

"The general style of furnishing a dining-parlour should be in substantial and useful things, avoiding trifling ornaments and unnecessary decorations. The pillars are emblematic of the use we make of these rooms, in which we eat the principal meal for nature's support. The furniture



**MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD AND CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS**

*Owned by George Dagworthy Mayo, Esq., Richmond, Va. See page 46.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

without exception is mahogany, as being the next suitable for such apartments." Sheraton's symbolism is always amusing: he might be called the Maeterlinck of cabinet-makers. With regard to the dome, he writes: "I am of the opinion that the notion of employing domes for the



WORK-TABLE

Owned by the Pickering family, in the Pickering House, Salem, Mass. See page 482.

roofs of grand buildings was first suggested by the appearance of the hemisphere surrounding our earth or horizon, forming a canopy or roof to the globe; which, if it were so, domes had their origin from a truly sublime and magnificent idea. The use of domes for the tops of beds is of much later date than for buildings; but it is certain, whoever he was who first employed domes for the tops of beds, must be considered as a person of enlarged ideas, as no other top or roof for a genteel bed can equal them;



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

therefore we see them generally used for state beds, where both grandeur and bold effect are essentially requisite."

Sheraton's beds, some of which will be described in the last chapter, are very curious and complicated arrangements of upholstery. They include alcove beds, French beds, state beds, beds with domes and canopies, and sofa beds. His sofas are very handsome, and among them we find the new "Turkey sofa" and the "Chaise Longue," the use of which, he tells us, is "to rest or loll upon after dinner." A good specimen appears on page 479.

He is also fond of designing writing-desks, dressing-tables, and work-tables for ladies, and equips them with many ingenious mechanical contrivances. The work-table is invariably furnished with a bag suspended to a frame that can be drawn forward. This he calls the "Pouch Table." Sheraton's chairs are highly valued to-day. They usually have straight, tapering legs and square backs. The chair to the left on page 473 (the other is a "Fancy" chair) and that on page 475 are good examples. Two work-tables appear on pages 481 and 483. Each has some of the Sheraton marks. The "kidney-shaped," which Sheraton adopted from the French, determines the period of the one owned by Mrs. Henry P. Archer. The other example belongs to Mr. John Pickering of Salem, Mass.

"In the chair branch," Sheraton says, "it requires a particular turn in the handling of the slopes, to make them agreeable and easy. It is very remarkable, the difference of some chairs of precisely the same pattern, when executed by different chair-makers; arising chiefly from the want of taste concerning the beauty of an outline, of which we judge by the eye, more than the rigid rules of geometry."

Some of Sheraton's late designs for chairs were those

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

he named "Herculaneums," of course in the antique style ; hall chairs made of mahogany "with turned seats and the crest or arms of the family painted on the back"; and "conversation chairs," upon which the "Incroyable" of the period sat with the back of the chair between his legs,



WORK-TABLE

Kidney-shaped work-table owned by Mrs. Henry P. Archer, Charleston, S. C. See page 482.

resting his arms upon the top rail, which was upholstered comfortably. "The manner of conversing amongst some of the highest circles of company," says Sheraton, "on some occasions, is copied from the French by lounging on a chair. It should be observed that they were made extraordinary long between back and front, for the purpose of space for the fashionable posture; and also that they are

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

narrow in the front and back, as an accommodation to this mode of conversing."

"The conversation chairs are used in library or drawing-rooms. The parties who converse with each other sit with their legs across the seat, and rest their arms on the top rail, which for this purpose is made about three inches and a half wide, stuffed and covered."

Two characteristic Sheraton chairs are reproduced on pages 473 and 475. The first chair, to the left of the screen letter-case, belongs to Miss Anne Van Cortlandt, Croton-on-the-Hudson. The second belongs to the Colonial Dames, Baltimore, Md. It is of mahogany inlaid with satin-wood with the bell-flower on the leg.

The sideboard facing page 458 is of the Sheraton period. It is inlaid with cord and tassels, flowers and ribbon in green, red and yellow woods. The knife-boxes have silver ball-and-claw feet, locks and handles.



TURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

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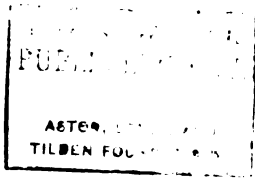
# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



PART VII  
DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED FURNITURE  
FROM 1775 TO 1830

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS : NEW YORK





**THE FURNITURE  
OF OUR   
FOREFATHERS**





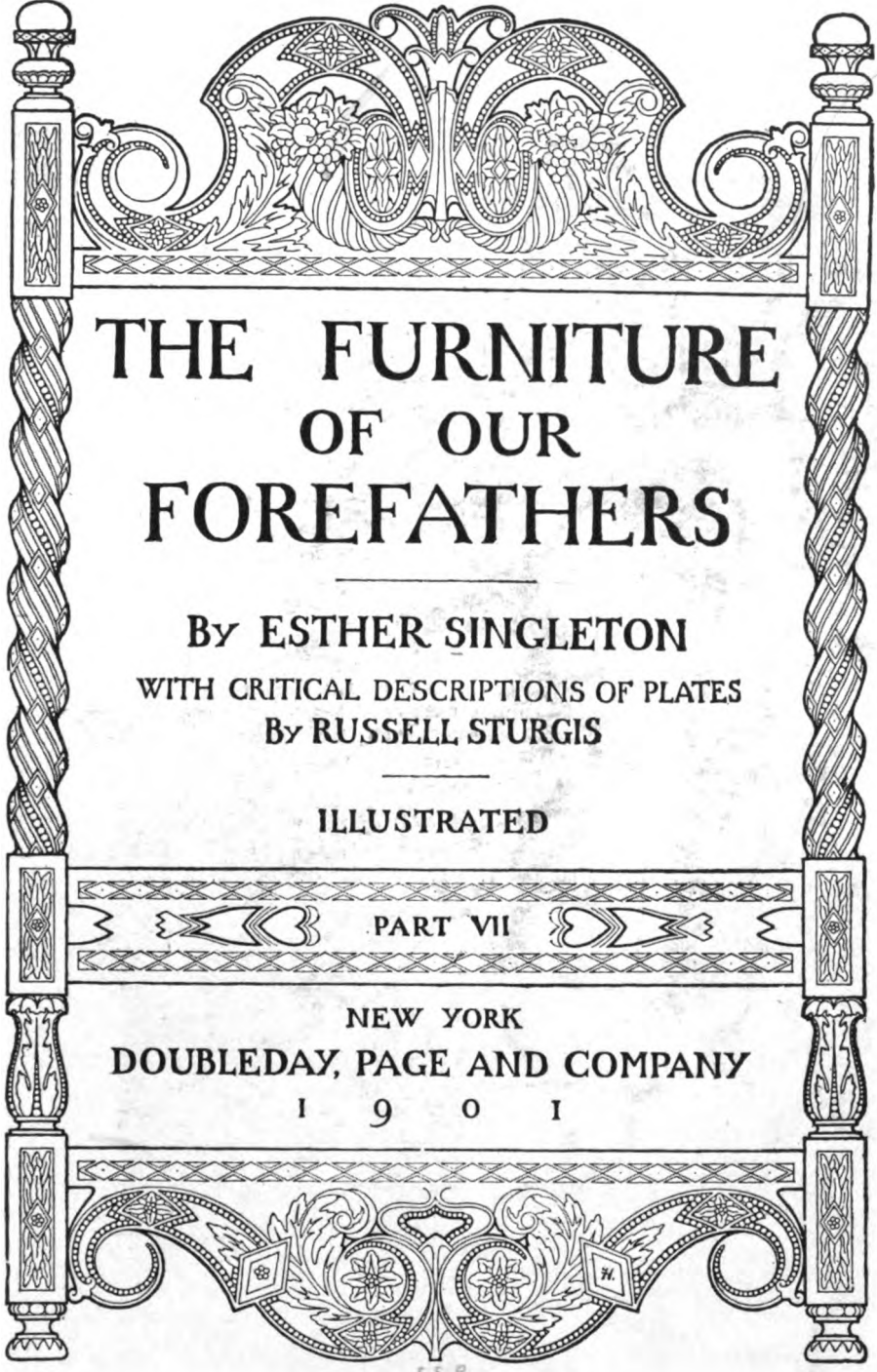
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ED OAK SIDEBOARD

*New York; now by Miss Jessie Colby, New York, N. Y.  
page 536.*



THE FURNITURE  
OF OUR  
FOREFATHERS

By ESTHER SINGLETON

WITH CRITICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PLATES  
By RUSSELL STURGIS

ILLUSTRATED

PART VII

NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND COMPANY

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NOVEMBER, 1901**





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WITH CRITICAL NOTES ON MANY OF  
THE PLATES BY RUSSELL STURGIS

ALL THE NOTES FURNISHED BY MR. STURGIS  
ARE FOLLOWED BY HIS SIGNATURE.

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|---|------|
| FRONTISPIECE; CARVED OAK SIDEBOARD FACING   | iii  |
| <p>This handsome specimen is of rich, dark oak elaborately carved, the central panels of the two doors being appropriate designs of fish and birds. Above the doors are two drawers, decorated with grotesque heads, which are hollowed out to form handles. This sideboard suggests the old livery cupboard (see pages 36 and 207) used for the display of plate and for delivery or service. Upon it stand some valuable examples of family silver brought from England by the Colgates toward the end of the eighteenth century. E. S.</p>   |      |
| CARVED EBONY TABLE . . . . . FACING   | 487  |
| <p>The set of furniture to which this valuable table belongs has already been described on page 416 and in the first note to the illustrations in Part VI. The table is of unusual dimensions. The carving on the base consists of graceful leaves and flowers in high relief and the rich border suggests lace. Upon the table stand many rare ornaments bought in China during Mr. Caleb T. Smith's residence there from 1850 to 1870. Among them is a carved ivory ball, made of seven balls carved one within the other. This hangs from a standard of carved ebony that was made especially to exhibit this treasure to advantage. E. S.</p> |      |
| FRENCH CHAIR . . . . .  | 489  |
| <p>Armchair of the modern sort with cushioned back and seat, and separately cushioned arms, the whole belonging to that type which in France under the Regency and under Louis XV. were called <i>comfortables</i> with an attempted use of the English term. The piece in question is very delicately worked with refined carving forming the mouldings at the edge, and the larger surfaces veneered with richly veined woods. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| MARYLAND CHINA CABINET . . . . . FACING   | 490  |
| <p>Corner cupboard with glass front, an unusual piece of the kind, as light and graceful as those in Part V. are massive and in a sense architectural. This is a piece of the delicate work of Heppelwhite's time, or copying his school very closely. The inlays and the delicate mouldings which form the edges of the door panels below and in the glazed doors above form similar edges and also the sash bars—all these being made of the delicately veined wood—are perfect of their kind. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| MAHOGANY DESK . . . . .   | 491  |
| <p>Chest of drawers with writing-desk above. This combination of large drawers raised well above the floor and of a desk above too high for the ordinary writer sitting on an ordinary chair was, as we have found, very common at earlier epochs. The present piece is of the beginning of the nineteenth century and shows much of that indifference to decorative effect—that satisfaction with surfaces of polished mahogany as the sole eye-pleasing</p>   |      |

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element in the composition—which was so characteristic of the years from 1815 to 1860. It is only when the workman reaches the legs of the piece that he allows himself a little divergence into ornamentation; and that ornamentation is of the most obvious and simple character. R. Sturgis.

**FRENCH SOFA AND CHAIR . . . . . 493**

Two pieces belonging to a set that was brought from France by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. The woodwork is lacquered and decorated with Chinese figures. The feet of the sofa terminate in brass claws. E. S.

**DRAWING ROOM . . . . . FACING 494**

This room contains excellent examples of furniture that was fashionable about the time of the Revolution. The chairs and sofas are of the Sheraton and Heppelwhite models, with the exception of two carved armchairs that belonged to Louis Philippe. The house and this room are fully described on pages 494-5. E. S.

**MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD . . . . . 498**

Sideboard of the closing years of the eighteenth century. One of those effective pieces in which the severer taste of the time embodied especially in the *Louis Seize* work of France went to give perfect utility, great beauty of surface, sparing and well applied ornament and generally harmonious composition. This is one of the most effective sideboards of the time. The reeded surface in the middle below represents a revolving or "disappearing" door which is slid sidewise, and packs itself away behind a lining of thin woodwork. R. Sturgis.

**CARVED CHAIR, CARVED MIRROR AND TABLE FACING 498**

The chair, carved with a delicate openwork pattern of leaves and flowers, is said to have come from India; the carved ebony mirror, originally in the Emperor's Summer Palace at Peking, may be compared with other examples of Chinese carving in Part VI. and in the frontispiece to this chapter; the table is interesting on account of the great number of South American woods of which it is constructed and with which it is inlaid. Upon it stand some handsome examples of Chinese porcelain and carving, including a box of chessmen. E. S.

**MIRROR, CHAIR, SPINNING-WHEEL AND CANDEL-  
ABRA . . . . . FACING 500**

The mirror is described on page 499; the chair, which is of Gothic design, belongs to the period of the Gothic revival under Pugin about 1820 to 1830. The seat is upholstered in bright worsted work,—somewhat reminiscent of the old Turkey-work. The bronze and gilt candelabra are described on pages 499-500. The spinning-wheel is a simple one. E. S.

**ELEANOR CUSTIS'S HARPSICHOORD AND TAMBOUR  
FRAME . . . . . 501**

Harpichord which, like the spinets seen in earlier parts of this work, has in its case and the supporting members no architectural treatment, no carving, no inlay, no decoration of the usual sorts. Elsewhere there has been consideration of this very peculiar phenomenon, namely, the complete abstinence of the designers of these important instruments from all sumptuousness of effect. The appearance of the piano changed it all suddenly.

The piano stool shown in the same plate belongs rather to the epoch of the elaborate piano facing 516 and the sofa facing 510. The tambour frame, an excellent example of that forgotten but certainly useful and agreeable piece of furniture, is of about the same date as the harpsichord and the difference in treatment is only another exemplification of what has been said and repeated in these notes, namely, that the clavichords of different kinds were combined with frames so much more simple than other contemporary pieces. R. Sturgis.

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| CHAIR FROM MOUNT VERNON AND PAINTED ROSE-<br>WOOD CARD TABLE . . . . .  | 505  |
| <p>Card table in which painting of the representative sort, with flowers more or less realistic in character, has been used exactly as the piece on page 557. The Greek anthemions at the four corners of the table when opened are also, probably, painted and not inlaid as they would have been forty years earlier—for this table is probably of the early years of the nineteenth century.</p> <p>A very beautiful drawing-room chair with the unusual feature of casters for all four legs, and which has been finished in what is now called "enamel" paint, white or cream-coloured, is earlier than the table. The use of the simple fluting and the spiral bead at the edges is very judicious and effective. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| WASHINGTON'S BEDROOM, MOUNT VERNON . FACING   | 508  |
| <p>Room at Mount Vernon in which the entire simplicity of the eighteenth-century programme of house furnishing is presented to us in an interesting way. Washington passed for a wealthy land-holder and his position as President and as past president would necessarily have caused him to live as sumptuously as any of his neighbors or contemporaries in more distant States. Here, however, in a good bedroom, there is no pretence made of any elaborateness of decoration or furniture as having ever existed. The carpet of course is modern, and although the pieces of furniture be of Washington's time they do not necessarily belong to the room in which they are now placed; but the room is shown as the plain thing that it must have been even when Washington was spending his few years of retirement at his ancestral home.</p> <p>The mantelpiece is one of the most interesting things in the room; the stone or slate facing below and the wooden frame shelf and frieze between are all characteristic and extremely appropriate. The great chest of drawers with bookcase is of the type which has been shown in richer examples. The trunk mail or leather travelling trunks, the chair, and the round stand are of Washington's earlier days when he was still in command of the army or even before that, but the <i>fauteuil</i> is of his post-presidential time, a piece of the closing years of the century. R. Sturgis.</p> |      |
| MAHOGANY SOFA . . . . . FACING  | 510  |
| <p>Sofa in which the elaborate style of carving well shown in the piano facing 516 exists in even greater richness, but without quite the same intelligent disposition of the parts. It is, however, a matter of extreme difficulty to design aright the wooden outline to which such a frame as this is limited. It covers and conceals the solid structure of the sofa and some part of it may even belong to that structure, but the important part played by the textile material which covers seat, arms and back leaves to the designer of the woodwork so very little opportunity that it must be an able man who reaches great success in the treatment of his design. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| GEORGE WASHINGTON'S DESK . . . . .  | 511  |
| <p>This is an example of the heavy and clumsy furniture that supplanted the Sheraton styles, and the turned balusters at the top and the <i>chutes</i> of the bell-flower, large and coarse in design, inlaid in satin-wood contribute the only decoration. The roll top is composed of narrow strips of wood glued on canvas. This work Sheraton calls "tambour." The sideboard on page 498 has a tambour shutter to close the arched opening. E. S.</p>   |      |
| CHAIR FROM WASHINGTON'S PRESIDENTIAL MAN-<br>SION . . . . .   | 513  |
| <p>Armchair of <i>Louis Seize</i> design and covered with a piece of silk brocade of the period. This is a characteristic and well preserved specimen; not otherwise were made the chairs which furnished the smaller Trianon or the mansions of the nobility at Versailles. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| MUSICAL GLASSES . . . . . FACING  | 514  |
| <p>Harmonica in which the necessarily plain box, the lower part of which is, in the best examples, hollow and resonant, is made as effective as possible to the workman as a piece of furniture by the mounting upon two columns and a front piece suggestive of a lyre. Such pieces were somewhat in vogue in France from 1770 to the close of the century, and the</p>  |      |



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popular word was that they were the invention of Benjamin Franklin. It seems, however, that the musical glasses originated by Franklin were played with the finger only, and by means of a delicate rubbing which caused the saucers with water in them to vibrate with a more or less shrill sound as the amount of water was increased. A later development involved the use of larger and deeper glasses which were played upon by little hammers of cork. R. Sturgis.

### CHAIR GIVEN BY WASHINGTON TO READ . . . . . 515

Armchair of the close of the eighteenth century, the back formed of that curious combination of lines and curves which stood for a Greek lyre. It is finished in white or ivory white. R. Sturgis.

### PIANOFORTE . . . . . FACING 516

Piano of an early form and exemplifying perfectly the florid style of 1820 and following years. This style we have occasion to touch upon in connection with high-post bedsteads in Parts V. and VI. and in the sofa facing page 510 and other pieces in the present Part VII. Nowhere, however, does the sculpture seem as perfect as here. The gilded metal caps at the junction of these legs with the piano itself and the metal rosettes of two patterns in the frieze above are suggestions taken from the French Empire style; so much remains, but it does seem as if the rich sculpture in hard, dark coloured, highly polished wood had come from a style earlier than that of the Empire. It is as if traditions had been preserved in England and perhaps even more carefully preserved in the Atlantic States of America, leaning upon which the workmen of the early nineteenth century were able to strike out this rather daring line for themselves. R. Sturgis.

### THOMAS JEFFERSON'S DESK . . . . . 519

Writing-desk with the hinged and revolving front piece forming a continuation of the steep slope above; the inkstands finding safety in one of the upper drawers, which, when opened, is seen to contain racks for pens and the like, as well as square compartments for the ink-bottles. This arrangement of providing the desired slope is common in the portable writing-desks of the period—that is to say, in the square-cornered brass-bound mahogany or mahogany veneered boxes which gentlemen used habitually from 1800 to 1850, and in which their important papers were often kept. Such a portable desk was always furnished with firm handles dropping into sockets, so as to be well out of the way, and the owner might take it on a sea voyage with him or into the country, feeling that he had all his precious belongings under his hand. Here the same form is applied to a more stationary piece of furniture which in itself contains no ornamental feature except the moulded and reeded legs. R. Sturgis.

### WEST PARLOUR, MOUNT VERNON . . . . . FACING 520

Room at Mount Vernon furnished with a carpet woven for the room itself with the arms of the United States. This is a medallion carpet rather good in general design, the proportion of the parts being well kept, but the barbarous heraldry of the early nineteenth century was opposed to anything like great success in colour combination. One thing is noticeable—the escutcheon borne on the breast of the eagle has simply the chief azure and the field party per pale argent and gules, there being then two unusual features, one altogether welcome and the other of doubtful propriety. In the first place the chief should not have the stars; they belong in the flag, but not in the escutcheon of the United States, as that was adopted by Act of Congress, and in this the present example is correct. On the other hand, the field below, the chief instead of thirteen pieces (or vertical stripes) has here seventeen, and the silver or white stripes are in the greater number; in this the heraldic marshalling before us is incorrect.

The ivory finished *fauteuil* of very beautiful *Louis Seize* design is of the second half of the eighteenth century, and of course not of the sixteenth, as its printed inscription sets forth. R. Sturgis.

### LADY'S WRITING-DESK . . . . . FACING 524

This desk is somewhat similar in form to the letter-case (see pages 119 and 473). This is constructed of rosewood, and is beautifully inlaid with ivory. It is furnished with a clock and a musical box. This was imported from Belgium early in the nineteenth century. E. S.

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| <p><b>PIANOFORTE</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Piano of the earliest type, the frame having the same severe simplicity which has been noted in connection with harpichords and spinets—the instruments which were the forerunners of the piano. It remains a puzzle—this severe simplicity, this abstinence from all attempt at elaborateness of design—characteristic of the earlier clavichords. As soon, however, as the piano was introduced, the very great weight of the necessary mechanism pointed the way to a different treatment of the frame, and the result appears in the six-legged design with legs, moreover, much heavier and stronger shown in the hardly later piano facing page 516. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 525  |
| <p><b>SECRETARY</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Escritoire of the upright pattern which, as a recent French novelist has said, is found nowadays only in country hotels; having, however, the somewhat unusual feature of a large music-box for its crowning member. It is undoubtedly with some reference to the artistic character of this last-named refinement that the uppermost member of the composition is so elaborate with its late Ionic columns and gilded metal appliques. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 529  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD</b> . . . . . <b>FACING</b></p> <p>Sideboard of about 1820 with the simple Georgian style in its full force. The pieces of this epoch cannot compare for grace with those of thirty years earlier, but they are rational and comely and enable the owner to furnish and decorate a room in entire accordance with the life of a family of cultivated and intelligent persons. The mirror frame, which is of about the same date of the sideboard, shows the richer work of the time. For some reason not explained these frames intended to be gilt (as they most commonly were) have always been allowed to retain a richness of form which we can almost say was denied to every other utensil or piece of furniture from 1790 to 1850. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 532  |
| <p><b>LADY BLESSINGTON'S WORK-TABLE</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Attention has been called in the text to the popularity of the lady's work-table. This example was specially designed for Lady Blessington. When the top, which is eighteen inches in diameter, is opened, it shows a well surrounded by small compartments. No work-table was considered complete without the bag, or pouch, or well, which was intended for both use and ornament. This piece of furniture is richly inlaid. E. S.</p>  | 533  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD, KNIFE-BOXES AND CEL-<br/>LARET</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Sideboard of the later years of the eighteenth century; an elaborate piece with three cupboards, two deep drawers for holding bottles erect, and seven other drawers of different sizes. The effort to combine so many parts in one piece of furniture has resulted in a form less entirely satisfying to the artistic sense than the simpler ones shown in Parts III. and IV. The obvious utility of the whole and the severe simplicity of its design saves it, of course, from anything approaching ugliness. Such a piece is handsomer when put to full use with all the three members of its top filled with their appropriate pieces, as indeed they are shown in the present picture. The knife-boxes are very good in design and it is a pity that one of them was not shown closed that they might be judged of completely. Small chest, probably a wine-cooler, set beneath the sideboard, but altogether apart from it. R. Sturgis.</p> | 535  |
| <p><b>DESK AND CHAIR</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Chair and writing-table of the early nineteenth century. The writing-table is of that delicate and simple form which is most fitting to a drawing-room or the corner of a dining-room which is used for other purposes than the family meals. The top is hinged at one edge and lifts up with a falling brace and a ratchet so as to be adjustable at different angles; and little sliding shelves at two ends serve for the safe placing of ink-stands, and, it appears, for cups of tea or mugs of liquid refreshment. This piece of furniture is of the most graceful and attractive character. The brass knobs are probably of the epoch. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 537  |

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| <p>“BANJO CLOCK” AND CLOCK WITH CHERRY CASE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FACING 540</p> <p>Two clocks, the one a wall clock intended to be secured high up in a stair hall or similar exposed situation, the other a tall clock like several others which we have seen in other parts of the present work.</p> <p>The wall clock is of the best form, an extremely intelligent design, allowing for the swing of the pendulum, and its whole shape expressing not only the essence of the thing in that it must be suspended by hooks in the back and supported on nothing beneath it, but also assuming a sufficiently graceful outline and showing a general composition far above the average of merit. The standing clock also is one of the best examples, the use of the classical columns is really exemplary; it is seldom that these architectural members are introduced into furniture with so much good taste and so good a result. R. Sturgis.</p> |      |
| <p>CURLED MAPLE DESK . . . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">541</p> <p>Chest of drawers with writing-desk and bookcase, a piece made sumptuous by beautiful veneer, probably of curl maple. The judicious use of this rippled golden surface with its semi-transparent lustre—its restriction to the sunken parts, drawer fronts and panels, is as noticeable as its inherent beauty. It was a good feeling, too, which made the piece so severe, so free from moulded and carved ornamentation, depending altogether upon the contrast of the darker and lighter wood and the beauty of the grain. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| <p>CHAIRS OF FRENCH MAKE . . . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">545</p> <p>Chair and armchair in which a rude carving fills the principal slat of the back. The range of subject is shown by comparison of the two; that on the right being a Bacchus and that on the left, a very simple and humble maiden watering her flowers. Another chair of the same set has a Pan—an Ægi-Pan—playing on what seems to be meant for a modern flute. It would be hard to date these pieces with accuracy or to establish their provenience. They seem to be the work of a man of independence who was trying to design something which was not made by his competitors. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| <p>CONSOLE TABLE . . . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FACING 548</p> <p>Side table in Empire Style with an unusual display of metal appliques, which are generally effective and well placed. The candelabra and centrepiece, with dancing Cupids carrying a corbelle, are of good French work, the candelabra older than the centrepiece, which is probably contemporary with the table upon which it stands. The upright in the design of the candelabra is composed of three terminal figures, or, more properly, of satyrs or heads resting upon <i>gaines</i> adorned with festoons. This, in gilt bronze, is an extremely effective ornamentation, and makes the chief part of the design, artistically speaking, an especially fine and unusual piece of metal work. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| <p>MAHOGANY SOFA . . . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">549</p> <p>Sofa covered with hair cloth, the carved wooden flanking-piece made up of arm and leg conjoined at either end having that same unmeaning character very common in the English and Anglo-American work of the reign of George III. The world of decoration of art, applied to purpose of daily life as well as the other neighbouring world of fine art pure and simple, was in its decline at this time—on the slope of the decline which did not reach its lowest depth until the middle of the nineteenth century. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| <p>DANIEL WEBSTER’S DESK . . . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FACING 550</p> <p>Chest of drawers with writing-desk; a piece of the well-known type so often represented in this work, but one of a singular severity and simple grace. The effect is obtained almost wholly by beauty of the wood, the front of the drawers being delicately veneered, and by the brass handles and scutcheons which fortunately have been preserved. The proportions, however, are unusually good and give the piece special charm. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |

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| CONSOLE TABLE . . . . .  | 553        |
| <p>A table, such as in the early years of the nineteenth century was made to stand between the windows of a drawing room and usually beneath a "pier glass," the mirror between the uprights of the table continuing the reflected surface nearly to the floor. Such pieces, often called pier tables, allow of a certain dignity, and that fact is sought in the present case by the very massive-seeming round columns, probably veneered and fitted with gilt metal bases and capitals. A gilt metal applique fills the centre of the front rail. This is a good specimen of the simpler furniture of the <i>Style Empire</i>. R. Sturgis.</p>  |            |
| CABINET . . . . .  | FACING 554 |
| <p>This is an example of native carving, the work of an amateur who amused himself in his leisure with carving chairs, tables, mantelpieces, etc., etc. This piece is further enriched with porcelain panels and brass hinges. E. S.</p>   |            |
| CHAIR AND TABLE . . . . .  | FACING 556 |
| <p>Table with painted top, an excellent specimen of the painted work of the earlier years of the nineteenth century. The pseudo-Greek border is pretty in design, though it does not well frame the painting which fills the medallion.</p> <p>The chair is an unusually well designed instance of the four-backed type. R. Sturgis.</p>   |            |
| FANCY CHAIR . . . . .  | 557        |
| <p>Chair of the later Georgian period, with fine and solid rush seat, the frame highly decorated with painting. A chair offers no large surface upon which a picture may be painted except at the inner or principal side of the back; and this is hidden by the person of the occupant and is in danger of injury. And yet at the time (1815 to 1830) when the painting of little landscape pictures was thought good for door-panels and table-tops, and for the edges of carefully bound books beneath the gilding of the leaves, a slight tendency in the same direction naturally took shape in the decoration of drawing-room chairs. This vestige of the admirable art of the eighteenth century, centred in France and extending thence over Europe, brought with it some really admirable compositions in the spirit of the English landscape painters of the time. The slight leaf painting upon the legs of the chair is a natural and proper "echo" of the color decoration above. R. Sturgis.</p> |            |
| MAHOGANY AND GILT MIRROR . . . . .   | 559        |
| <p>Mirror frame of the earlier years of the nineteenth century. The student will note the intelligence of the design—the systematic way in which the breaks of the outer border of the frame—breaks which in architecture are called acorns and lugs, suffice in the present instance to cover and excuse the spirited bits of free pierced carving, which forms a branch with oak leaves and acorns, seeming to hang down on each side. The design is spoiled by the elaborate lettering which has been added in later times. R. Sturgis.</p>   |            |
| MARBLE TABLE AND CHAIRS OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .  | FACING 560 |
| <p>Small centre table of marble beautifully veined. The set of tea-pot, cream-pot, sugar-pot and two cups and saucers are probably of the royal factory of Sèvres and of about 1810. The buildings represented in the medallions painted upon these pieces might all be identified with a little trouble, for the custom of the times was to represent actual scenes and objects as the motive for these adornments—a style of decoration certainly not characteristic of ceramic ware but identified with the work of this great establishment. R. Sturgis.</p>   |            |
| SECRETARY . . . . .  | 561        |
| <p>This piece may be compared with Governor Wentworth's desk on page 369. This is of rich mahogany. The legs are very simple as also are the brass handles, but the arrangement of the interior is quite elaborate. Here we find a number of pigeon-holes, drawers</p>   |            |

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

and secret drawers above the writing-slab, which is somewhat nearer the floor than usual in such pieces. The upper portion, which is enclosed with doors, contains many convenient drawers and pigeon-holes and partitions evidently for the use of large ledgers. The cornice is ornamented with a gilded eagle and burning torches also gilded. E. S.

## MAHOGANY CHAIR . . . . . 563

Drawing-room chair of the severe pseudo-classical style which was developed from the French classical revival under Louis XIV., but carried further and to its decadence under the first Napoleon. The Englishmen working for the simple English dining-room or drawing-room rejected wrought ornamentation, colour and gilding, and thought that they were doing something noble and altogether worthy in seeking alone the polished surface of mahogany combined with what they thought were classical forms. The result is not ugly merely because the piece shows well enough the purpose for which it is intended, and provides a comfortable seat without the disfigurement of ill-applied ornamentation. R. Sturgis.

## EMPIRE CHAIR . . . . . 565

Armchair in the "Empire Style" and probably of French make. This is a characteristic specimen; seldom in America is to be found so unmistakably Imperial a design. The attempted classical character of the hollowed back is as important as the purely decorative parts. R. Sturgis



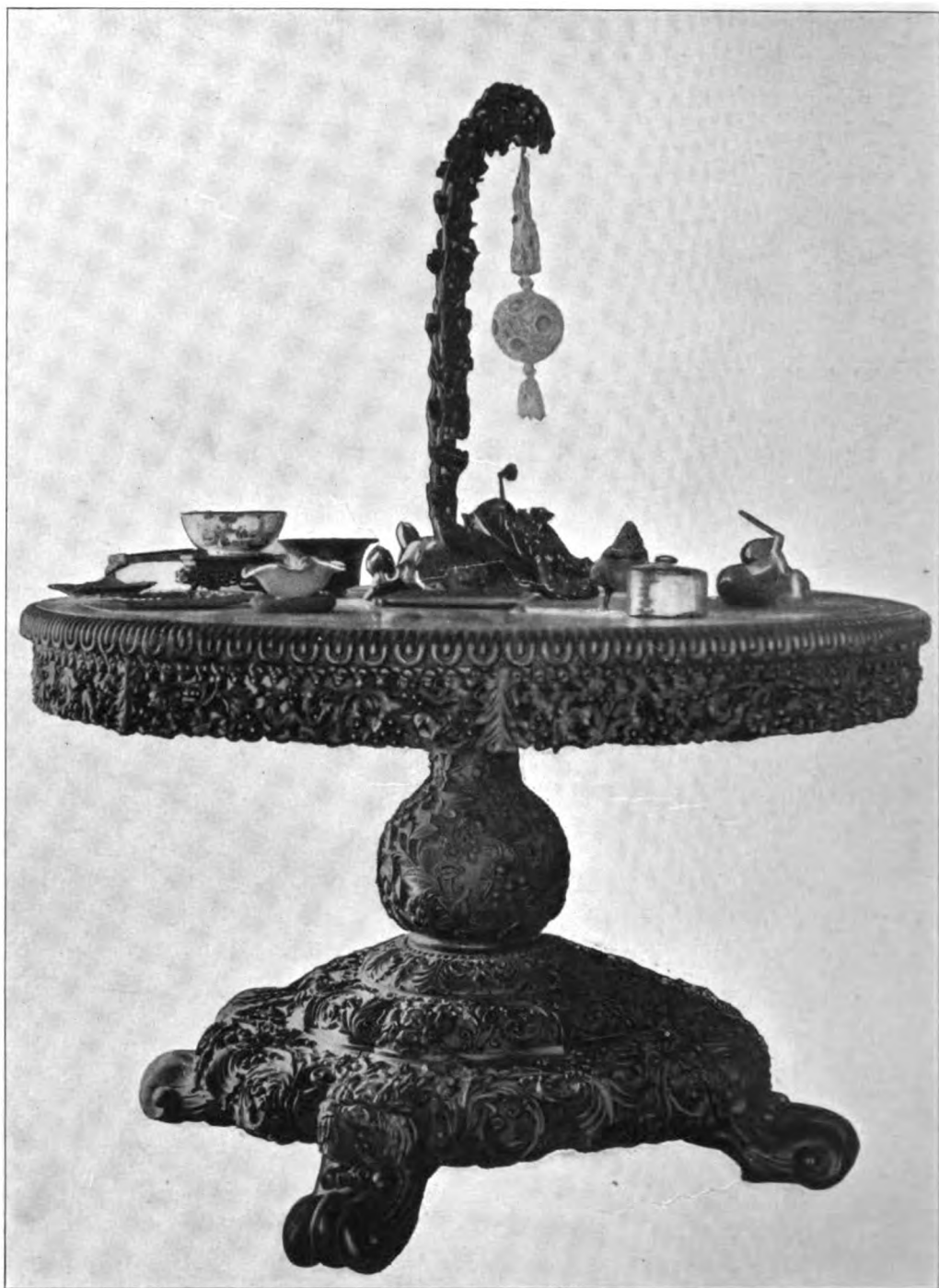
**THE FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS**

**Part VII**



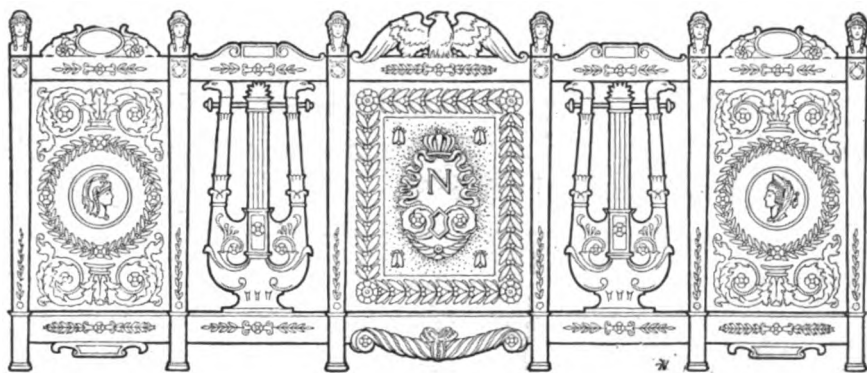
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**CARVED EBONY TABLE**

*Owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smitbtown, L. I. See page 538.*



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

## PART VII

### Domestic and Imported Furniture

FROM 1776 TO 1830



AT the outbreak of the Revolution, the home of a wealthy American lost nothing in comparison with that of an Englishman in similar circumstances. Imported and home-made furniture of the Chippendale school was all the rage, and the extent to which the latest foreign fashions were welcomed may be gathered from the protests of the day. Serious attempts were made to curtail importations which were said to be ruining native industry. In the North, simplicity was more marked than in the South; but, even in New England, fashion and elegance were found in many households, as we have already seen. There, however, magnificence sometimes aroused unfavourable comment. In 1774, John Adams notes: "John Lowell, at Newburyport, has built himself a house like the palace of a nobleman, and lives in great

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

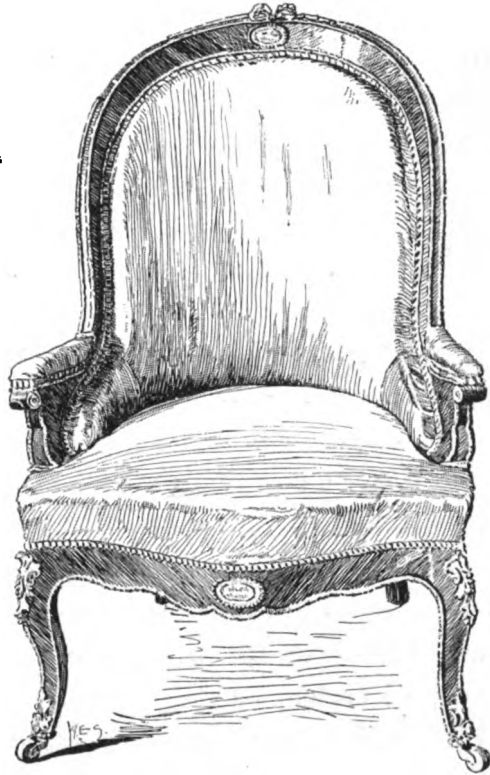
splendour." Mr. Adams was one of those who were hostile to anything of that kind. In 1778, commenting upon the splendour of French life, he says:

"I cannot help suspecting that the more elegance, the less virtue, in all times and countries. Yet I fear that even my own dear country wants the power and opportunity more than the inclination to be elegant; soft and luxurious. . . . Luxury has as many and as bewitching charms on your side of the ocean as on this; and luxury wherever she goes, effaces from human nature the image of the Divinity. If I had power, I would forever banish and exclude from America all gold, silver, precious stones, alabaster, marble, silk, velvet and lace."

The difference between the North and South impressed every traveller. It was striking. The life of the Southern planter was one of ease and elegance; and conditions differed slightly in Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina. The centres of fashion were Annapolis, Williamsburg and Charleston,—gay and pleasure-loving towns. The capital of Maryland reached its height of splendour a few years before the Revolution, and this did not diminish until several years after the war had ceased. The presence of many Englishmen on official missions, with their retinues and families, brought fashion, affluence and gaiety to the colonial capital. The houses were renowned for their costly and beautiful furniture, their well-arranged and cultivated grounds, and their lavish hospitality. Eddis, an English traveller, who wrote his experiences in 1769–1777, remarks: "Whatever you have heard relative to the rigid Puritanical principles and economical habits of our American brethren, is by no means true when applied to the inhabitants of the Southern provinces. Liberality of senti-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ment, and genuine hospitality are everywhere prevalent; and I am persuaded they too frequently mistake profuseness for generosity, and impair their health and their fortunes by splendour of appearance and magnificence of entertain-



FRENCH CHAIR

Owned by Mr. Robert Colby, New York, N. Y. See page 538.

ment.” He mentions, particularly, among the beautiful villas in the vicinity of Annapolis, *Rousby Hall* in Calvert County, about seventy miles from the town, as being “as well-known to the weary, indigent traveller as to the affluent guest,” and adds: “In a country where hospitality is the distinguishing feature, the benevolent owner has estab-

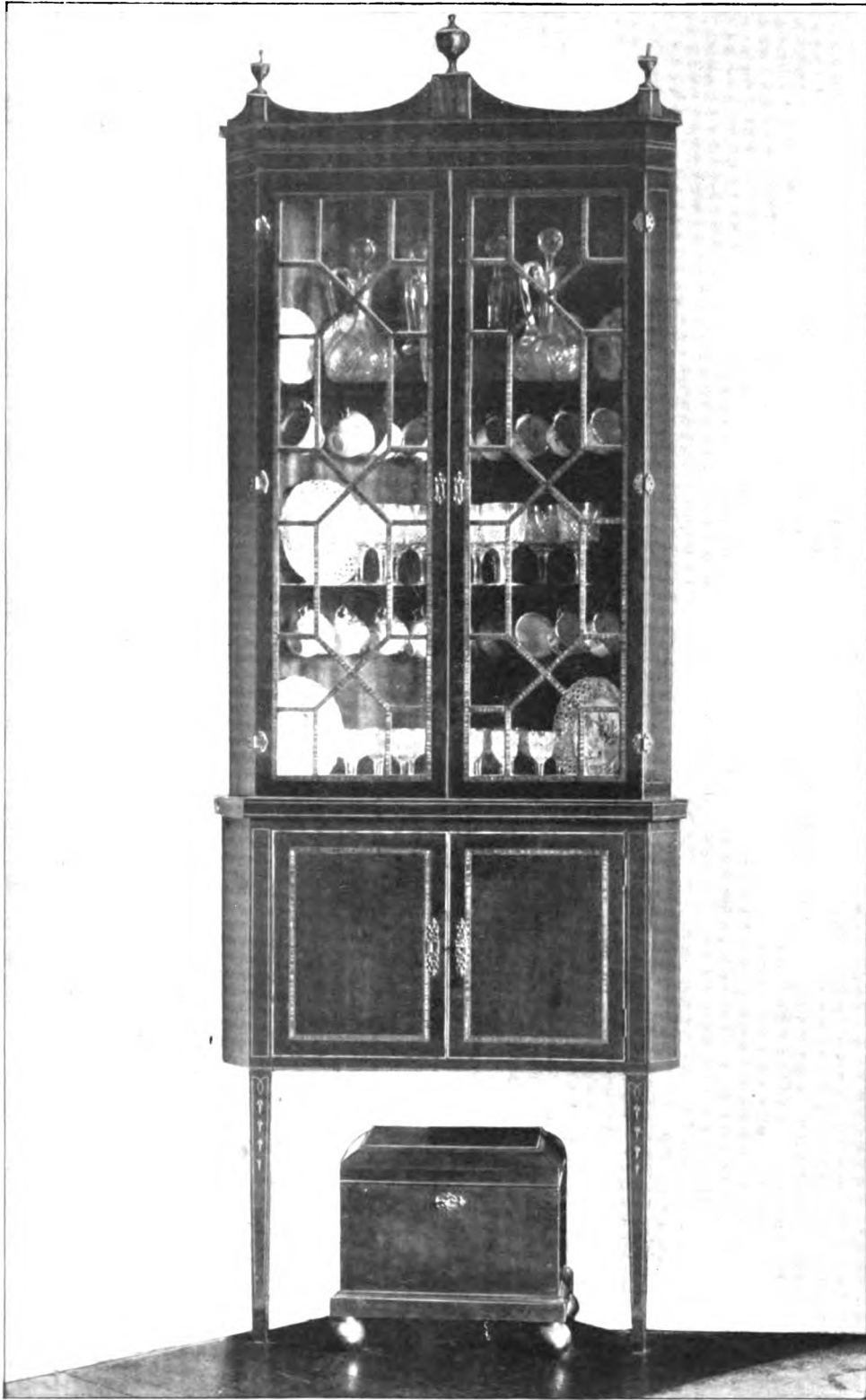
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

lished a preëminence, which places his character in an exalted point of view.”

The Abbé Robin, who accompanied Count Rochambeau as chaplain to America, is another witness of the contrast between North and South. In 1781, he writes in his *Nouveau Voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale* :

“As we advance towards the South, we find a very sensible difference in the manners and customs of the people. In Connecticut the houses are placed on the public roads at small intervals, and barely large enough to accommodate a single family, and are furnished in the most plain and simple manner ; but here are spacious, isolated habitations, consisting of several edifices, built in the centre of a plantation, and so remote from the public road as to be lost to the view of travellers. These plantations are cultivated by negroes. . . . The furniture of the houses here is of the most costly wood and the rarest marble, enriched and decorated by artists ; they have light and elegant carriages, which are drawn by fine horses ; the coachmen are slaves and are richly dressed. There appears to be more wealth and luxury in Annapolis than in any other city which I have visited in this country. The extravagance of the women here surpasses that of our own provinces ; a French hairdresser is a man of great importance ; one lady here pays to her *coiffeur* a salary of a thousand crowns. This little city, which is at the mouth of the Severn river, contains several handsome edifices. The state-house is the finest in the country ; its front is ornamented with columns, and the building surmounted by a dome. There is also a theatre here. Annapolis is a place of considerable shipping. The climate is the most delightful in the world.”

A corner cupboard from Maryland, probably the work



MARYLAND CHINA CABINET

*Owned by Mrs. George Ben Johnston, Richmond, Va. See page 491.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

of a native cabinet-maker, faces page 490. It is of mahogany inlaid with satin-wood, a species of the bell-flower appearing on the legs. The panels of the doors are formed of some light mottled wood, which also frames the glass



MAHOGANY DESK

Owned by President Madison ; now by Mrs. George Ben Johnston, Richmond, Virginia. See page 521.

panes. The urns ornamenting the top are bronze and gilt. This curious three-cornered china cabinet, or cupboard, is owned by Mrs. George Ben Johnston, Richmond, Va., and is filled with handsome china and glass of the period.

When we find a writer impressed with conditions of



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

elegance, we naturally hesitate to accept his estimate until we know whether his experience has qualified him to judge. When, therefore, we find the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt speaking with approval of a typical Southern home, we are satisfied that the travellers already quoted did not greatly exaggerate. Of *Whitehall*, the home of Governor Sharp, the Duke says in his *Voyage dans les États-Unis* (1795-97), that this was "a most delightful retreat about seven miles distant (from Annapolis); his house is on a large scale, the design is excellent, and the apartments well fitted up and perfectly convenient." Elsewhere he says :

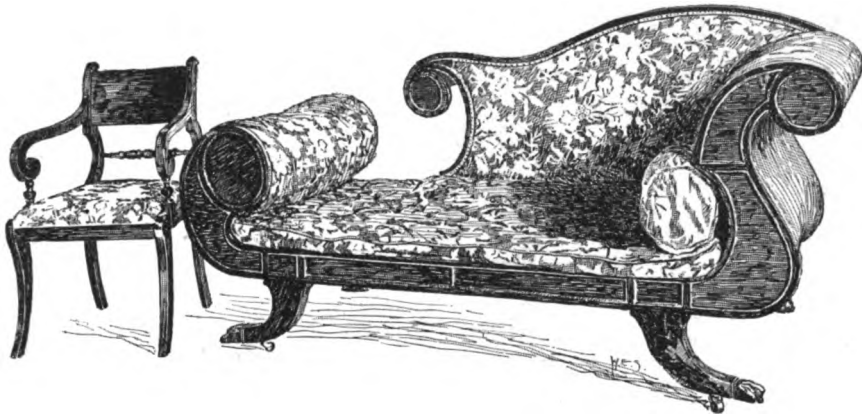
"In a country which has belonged to England for a long time, of which the most numerous and nearest connections are yet with England, and which carries on with England almost all of its commerce, the manners of the people must necessarily resemble, in a great degree, those of England. As for American manners particularly, those relative to living are the same as in the provinces of England. As to the dress, the English fashions are as faithfully copied as the sending of merchandise from England and the tradition of tailors and mantua-makers will admit of. The distribution of the apartments in their houses is like that of England, the furniture is English, the town carriages are either English or in the English taste; and it is no small merit among the fashionable world to have a coach newly arrived from London and of the newest fashion."

Eddis also writes :

"The quick importation of fashions from the mother country is really astonishing. I am almost inclined to believe that a new fashion is adopted earlier by the polished

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

and affluent American, than by many opulent persons in the great metropolis; nor are opportunities wanting to display superior elegance. We have varied amusements and numerous parties, which afford to the young, the gay, and the ambitious, an extensive field to contend in the race of vain and idle competition. In short, very little difference



FRENCH SOFA AND CHAIR

Owned by Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charleston, S. C. See page 538.

is, in reality, observable in the manners of the wealthy colonist and the wealthy Briton. Good and bad habits prevail on both sides the Atlantic.”

We not only find unprejudiced foreign travellers extolling the wealth, hospitality and elegances of living, but visitors from the Northern States never failed to be impressed with what they saw and the treatment they received. Occasionally they record their experiences. For example, Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts, who visited Charleston in 1773, writes: “This town makes a most beautiful appearance as you come up to it, and in many aspects a magnificent one. Although I have not been here twenty hours, I have traversed the most populous parts

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

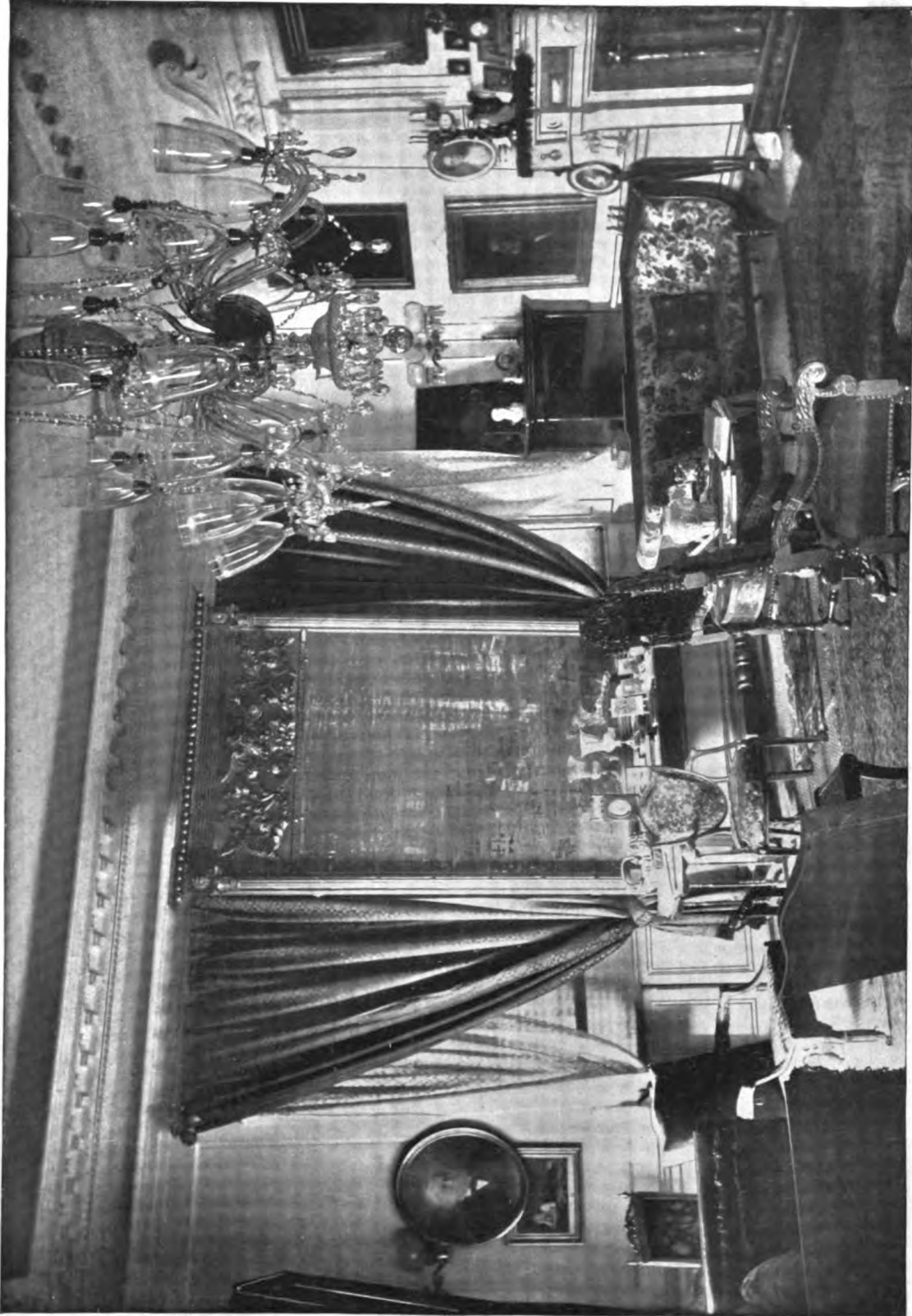
of it. I can only say in general, that in grandeur, splendour of building, decorations, equipages, numbers, commerce, shipping, and indeed in almost everything it far surpasses all I ever saw or ever expected to see in America."

On March 8th he was entertained at a house that is still standing, the drawing-room of which appears facing this page. He writes:

"March 8 (1773). Dined with a large company at Miles Brewton's, Esq., a gentleman of very large fortune; a superb house said to have cost him £8,000 sterling. A most elegant table, three courses, etc., etc. At Mr. Brewton's sideboard was very magnificent plate. A very fine bird kept familiarly playing about the room under our chairs and the table, picking up the crumbs and perching on the window and sideboard."

This fine brick house on King Street, with its generous doorway and double flight of marble steps, was built by the above mentioned Miles Brewton, an Englishman who came to Charleston early in the eighteenth century. In 1775, he left Charleston for England intending to leave his family there and return to America, as he was an ardent Revolutionist. The vessel was wrecked and not a passenger saved. The house became the property of his married daughter, Rebecca (Mrs. Jacob Motte), who dwelt here with her daughters until the British entered the city. Sir Henry Clinton and his officers occupied it in 1781-82, and Mrs. Motte retired to her plantation on the Congaree, near Columbia.

The home of Miles Brewton, now known as the Pringle House, is owned by his descendant, Miss Susan Pringle. It is an excellent example of a typical Charleston home of the eighteenth century. Upon the walls of the drawing-



**DRAWING-ROOM**  
*Pringle House, Charleston, S. C. See pages 49,4-5.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

room, facing page 494, is a portrait of Miles Brewton by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The large mirror between the windows dates from an early period, and has never been inflicted with a new glass. The frame is richly carved and gilt. The windows are draped in the old-fashioned style with curtains of daffodil-coloured damask that have hung in the same spot since the time of the Revolution. Much of the furniture in this enormous room is of the Heppelwhite and Sheraton period. A stuffed Heppelwhite armchair stands directly in front of the mirror. It, like the others of its type in the same room, is covered with crimson damask, which was so fashionable in its day. One of this set decorated with fringe has already appeared on page 451. The armchair on its left, which is one of another set, is covered with yellow damask; while others are upholstered with flowered material like the sofa that is cosily placed near the open fire. Other sofas in the room are covered with yellow damask. The two carved chairs standing on either side of the table, which, like all the rest of the furniture, is of mahogany, belonged to Louis Philippe. The room is of beautiful proportions, and the woodwork is particularly fine. The marble mantelpiece is very ornate and handsome; but, perhaps the most noticeable feature of the room is the superb crystal chandelier, consisting of twenty-four sconces, each furnished with a glass shade more than a foot in height. Fortunately, it has never been altered for gas or electricity, and the candles still shed their soft glow upon the room, and cause the enormous gironnelles in chains and pendants to sparkle with prismatic hues. Only a portion of this candelabrum appears, as it is built somewhat in the form of a pyramid.

A much more notable visitor to Charleston was Gen-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

eral Washington, who was entertained in a house on Church Street, near Tradd, owned by Judge Heyward, and which was "superbly furnished for the occasion." Two extracts from General Washington's *Diary* will be sufficient to show what his impressions were:

May 5, 1790. "Dined with a very large company at the Governor's and in the evening went to a Concert at the Exchange at which there were at least four hundred ladies, the number and appearance of which exceeded anything of the kind I had ever seen."

May 7, 1790. "Charleston contains about 1,600 dwelling-houses. . . . It lies low with unpaved streets (except the footways) of sand. There are a number of very good houses of Brick and wood, but most of the latter.—The Inhabitants are wealthy—gay—and hospitable; appear happy and satisfied with the General Government."

Washington also speaks of Captain Alston as a gentleman of large fortune whose "house which is large, new, and elegantly furnished, stands on a sand-hill high for the Country, and his Rice fields below."

It would seem that some of the Virginian houses were splendid while others were neglected and falling into decay. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt says that the Virginians spend more than their income. "You find, therefore, very frequently a table well served and covered with plate in a room where half the windows have been broken for years past, and will probably be so ten years longer. But few houses are in tolerable state of repair."

The Marquis de Chastellux also testifies: "The Virginians have the reputation, and with reason, of living nobly in their homes and of being hospitable; they give

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

strangers not only a willing, but a liberal reception. This arises, on one hand, from their having no large towns where they may assemble, by which means they are little acquainted with society except from the visits they make; and, on the other, their lands and their negroes furnishing them with every article of consumption and the necessary service, the renowned hospitality costs them very little. Their houses are spacious and ornamented, but their apartments are not commodious; they make no ceremony of putting three or four persons into the same room; nor do these make any objection to their being thus heaped together; for being in general ignorant of the comfort of reading and writing, they want nothing in their whole house but a bed, a dining-room, and a drawing-room for company. The chief magnificence of the Virginians consists in furniture, linen and plate; in which they resemble our ancestors, who had neither cabinets nor wardrobes in their castles, but contented themselves with a well-stored cellar and a handsome buffet."

The Marquis visited *Westover* and highly praised it.

"We travelled six and twenty miles without halting, in very hot weather, but by a very agreeable road, with magnificent houses in view at every instant; for the banks of the James River form the garden of Virginia. That of Mrs. Byrd, to which I was going, surpasses them all in the magnificence of the buildings, the beauty of its situation, and the pleasures of society."

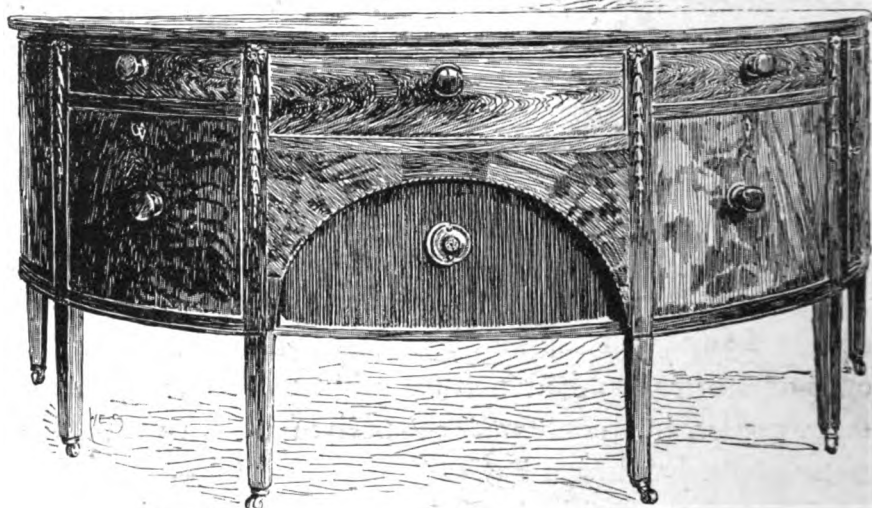
". . . Mr. Mead's house is by no means so handsome as *Westover*, but it is extremely well fitted up within, and stands on a charming situation; for it is directly opposite to Mrs. Byrd's, which with its surrounding appendages, has the appearance of a small town and forms a most delight-



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ful prospect. Mr. Mead's garden, like that of *Westover*, is in the nature of a terrace on the bank of the river."

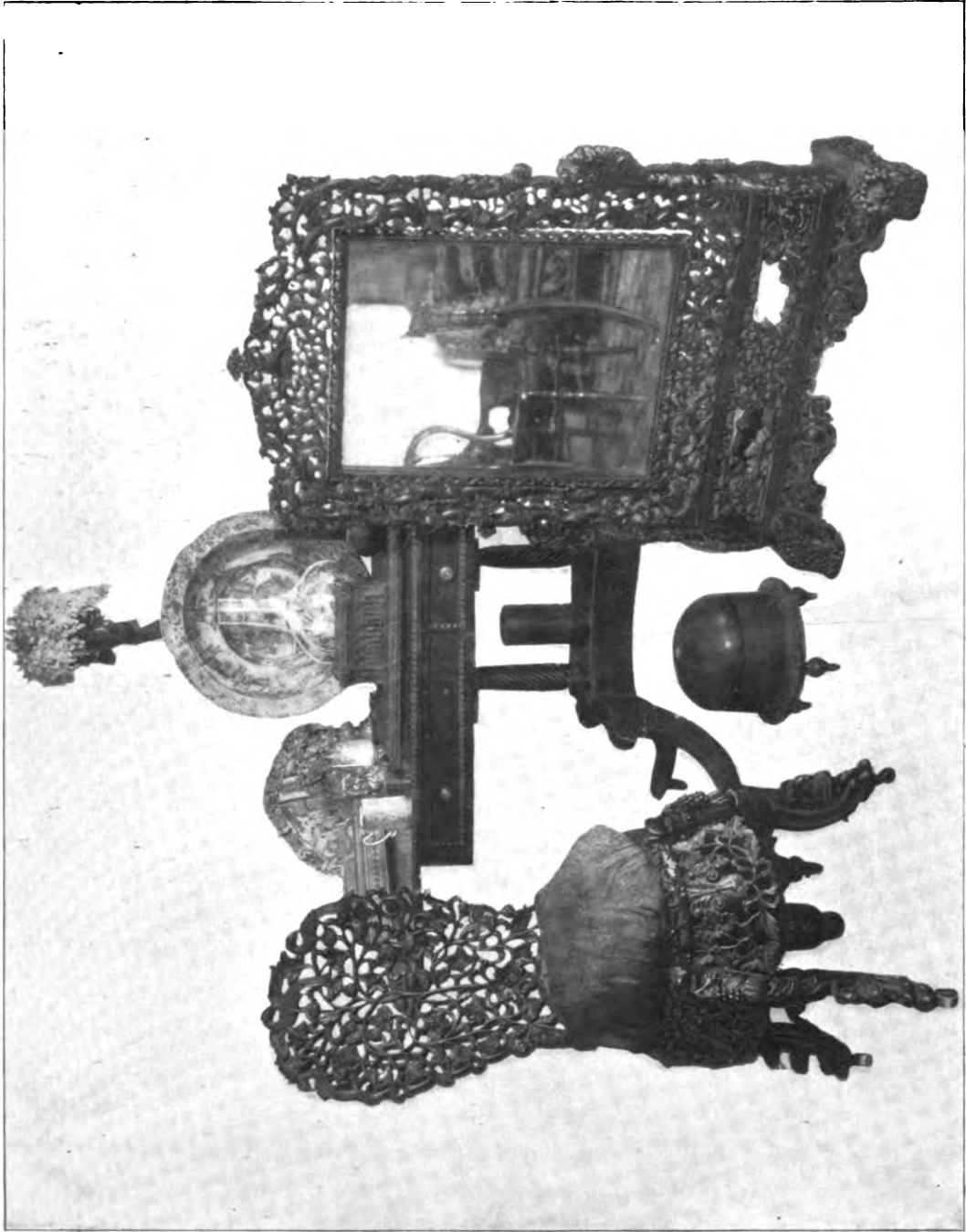
In 1779, another traveller, Anburey, spent a few days with Colonel Randolph at *Tuckaboe*, and says that the house seems to have been built for the sole purpose of hospitality, and it is therefore worth describing.



MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD

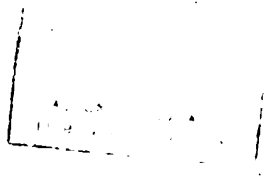
Owned by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass. See page 536.

"It is in the form of an H; and has the appearance of two houses joined by a large saloon; each wing has two stories, and four large rooms on a floor; in one the family reside, and the other is reserved solely for visitors; the saloon that unites them is of considerable magnitude, and on each side are doors; the ceiling is lofty, and to these they principally retire in the summer, being but little incommoded by the sun, and by the doors of each of the houses and those of the saloon being open, there is a constant circulation of air; they are furnished with four sophas, two on



CARVED EBONY MIRROR FROM THE SUMMER PALACE, PEKIN  
AND TABLE MADE OF SOUTH AMERICAN WOODS

*Owned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Small, Charleston, S. C. See page 538.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

each side, besides chairs, and in the centre there is generally a chandelier; these saloons answer the two purposes of a cool retreat from the scorching and sultry heat of the climate, and of an occasional ball-room. The outhouses are attached at some distance, that the house may be open to the air on all sides."

*Belvoir* is of special interest, on account of the ties between its owner and the master of *Mount Vernon*. The former was William Fairfax, whose daughter became the wife of Lawrence Washington. Young George Washington spent much of his time at *Belvoir* and after he became the proprietor of *Mount Vernon*, the happy relations still continued with his neighbours. The contents of *Belvoir* were sold by auction in 1774, on which occasion Washington bought articles of furniture to the value of £169-12-6, and has left a list of them in his own handwriting.

A typical convex mirror of the period is shown in the illustration facing page 500, showing a corner of a room in the home of Mrs. William L. Royall, Richmond, Va. This mirror, which is one of a pair, is exceedingly handsome. The carving of the dolphins and the burning torch is well executed. The entire frame and the sconces are gilt, and a band of black just below the large balls lends relief. These mirrors were the property of the Coles family of Virginia, and were long in the house of John Rutherford, Governor of Virginia, who married Emily Coles, and were inherited by their granddaughter, Mrs. Royall, the present owner.

The Gothic chair in the same picture belonged to the Rutherfoords; the spinning-wheel was owned by Mrs. Taylor, the sister of Chief-Justice Marshall of Virginia, and descended to her grandson, Dr. William L. Royall; while

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the candelabra of bronze and gold, representing Victory holding sconces in the shape of trumpets, were imported into the country by Andrew Stevenson, minister to the Court of Saint James, and descended by inheritance to Mrs. Royall. The only other similar pair in the country are at the *White House*, in Washington.

*Belvoir* was of brick and two stories high, with four rooms on the ground floor and five on the second, and servants' hall and cellar below. It was almost entirely furnished with valuable mahogany articles.

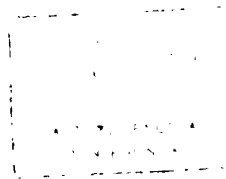
The "Dining-Room" contained a mahogany five-foot sideboard table; one pair mahogany square card tables; an oval bottle cistern on a frame; a "sconce glass gilt in Burnished Gold"; twelve mahogany chairs; three crimson morine drapery window curtains; a large Wilton Persian carpet; and a "scalopt mahogany voider," a knife tray, two dish trays, a "large mahogany cut rim tea tray," tongs, shovel, dogs and fender, comprised the list of small articles. In the parlour was a mahogany table (dining); a "mahogany spider leg table"; "a folding fire screen lined with yellow"; two mahogany armchairs covered with figured hair; a chimney-glass; two Saxon green plain drapery curtains; and dogs, tongs, shovel and fender. In Mrs. Fairfax's Chamber: a mahogany chest of drawers; a bedstead and curtains; window curtains; four chairs; a dressing table; and hearth furniture. In Colonel Fairfax's Room: a mahogany settee bedstead with Saxon green covers; a mahogany desk; a mahogany shaving-table; four chairs and covers; a mahogany Pembroke table; dogs, shovel, tongs and fender.

Of all the colonial houses now standing, *Mount Vernon* is the most interesting, on account of its associations. It



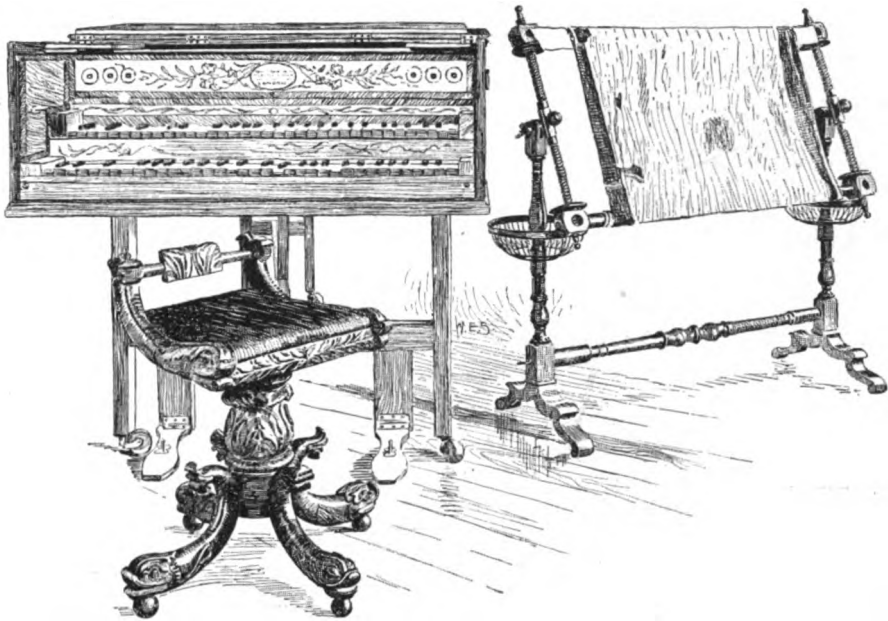
MIRROR, CHAIR, SPINNING-WHEEL AND BRONZE AND  
GILT CANDELABRA

*Owned by Dr. and Mrs. William L. Royall, Richmond, Va. See page 499.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

was built in 1743, by Lawrence Washington, when he married Miss Fairfax. Soon after his death in 1751, *Mount Vernon* passed by inheritance to his half-brother, George Washington, and here the latter brought his bride



ELEANOR CUSTIS'S HARPSICHORD AND TAMBOUR FRAME  
Now at *Mount Vernon*, Va. See page 502.

in 1759. Six years after Washington came into possession of *Mount Vernon*, he evidently thought his furniture needed repairing.

In 1757, he wrote to Richard Washington: "Be pleased, over and above what I have wrote for in a letter of the 13th of April, to send me 1 doz. strong chairs, of about 15 shillings apiece, the bottoms exactly made by the enclosed dimensions, and of three different colours to suit the paper of three of the bed-chambers also wrote for in my last. I must acquaint you, sir, with the reason of the



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

request. I have one dozen chairs that were made in this country; neat, but too weak for common sitting. I therefore propose to take the bottoms out of those and put them into those now ordered, while the bottoms which you send will do for the former, and furnish the chambers. For this reason the workmen must be very exact, neither making the bottoms larger nor smaller than the dimensions, otherwise the change can't be made. Be kind enough to give directions that these chairs, equally with the others and the tables, be carefully packed and stowed. Without this caution, they are liable to infinite damage."

In 1759, he again writes to London for "2 more chair bottoms, and 1 more Window Curtain and Cornice."

He also sent for busts of Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Charles XII. of Sweden and the King of Prussia, "not to exceed fifteen inches in height, nor ten in width," "2 other busts of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, somewhat smaller, 2 Wild Beasts, not to exceed twelve inches in height, nor eighteen in length. Sundry ornaments for chimney-piece."

In 1761, he sends to London, to Mr. Plinius, harpsichord-maker, in South Audley Street, Grosvenor Square, for a good instrument. He also gave a harpsichord to Eleanor Custis, his stepdaughter, for a wedding-present. This interesting instrument, which appears on page 501, has again found its place at *Mount Vernon*, and stands in the room known as "Miss Custis's Music Room." The mahogany stool in front of the harpsichord is somewhat clumsy, and the carved dolphins forming the legs contribute its one interesting feature. This also belonged to Miss Custis, as did the tambour frame. Upon this is a piece of her unfinished embroidery.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

When Washington arrived in New York, he first took up his residence in the house provided by Congress. This was No. 3 Cherry Street and Franklin Square, and the rooms were large and numerous. Mr. Osgood had been requested by a Resolution to put the house and the furniture thereof into proper condition for the residence and use of the President of the United States. According to an eye-witness, the furniture was extremely plain, but in keeping and well disposed, and arranged so as to give promise of substantial comfort. Mrs. Washington had sent by sea from *Mount Vernon* many ornaments and other articles, including pictures, vases, etc., that they liked to have, on account of associations. The rooms of *Mount Vernon* were full of souvenirs and offerings by many admirers. These included not only pictures and busts, but various relics, such as the key of the Bastille (presented by Lafayette in 1789), swords and other arms, and even furniture. Among others, Samuel Vaughan, an English admirer, sent to Washington in 1785, a magnificent marble mantelpiece, specially made in Italy, and three handsome porcelain vases. The mantelpiece still stands in the "Banquet Hall." Another interesting object is a carpet that now covers the floor of the West parlour in *Mount Vernon*. This carpet was made for Washington by order of Louis XVI., at the Gobelins manufactory, and is shown facing page 520. It afterwards came into the possession of the Hon. Jasper Yeates, of Lancaster, Pa. It remained on his parlour floor during his lifetime, and until about the middle of the present century, when his daughters had possession of the house. When the establishment was broken up, the carpet was offered for sale. This time it was purchased by his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Sarah Y. Whelen, of

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

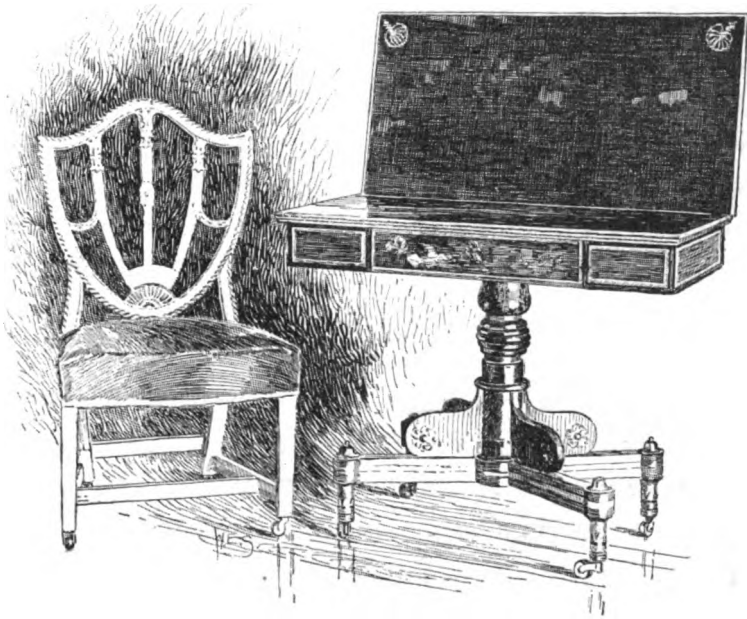
Philadelphia, and by her presented to the Mount Vernon Association.

It will be noticed that this carpet contains the heraldic arms of the new Federal Government, being sown with stars and bearing a central medallion of the eagle holding an olive branch and the arrows in its two claws, while below and above the bird are the stars and stripes. In front of the mantelpiece stands a chair of the Louis Seize type that was presented to General Washington by Lafayette. On either side of it are two excellent examples of "Chippendale" chairs,—mahogany, of course, and in reality developments of the old four-back chair that persistently outlives all fashions and styles. (See page 87.) The mantelpiece, ceiling and wall-panels of this room date from 1743, and above the mantelpiece is carved the Washington coat-of-arms. George Washington's initials and his crest are cast in the iron firebacks. The painting of the panel inserted into the mantelpiece is said to represent Admiral Vernon's fleet at Cartagena, and was sent to Lawrence Washington as a present from Admiral Vernon when he learned that the estate was named for him. Lawrence Washington owned 2,500 acres, but General Washington increased the property to nearly 8,000. He also enlarged the house, which is built of stone and brick, with a framework of oak.

*Mount Vernon*, although in no sense palatial, was comfortable throughout. The "New Room" was furnished handsomely. There were two sideboards here, adorned with six mahogany knife-cases, China images, and a China flower-pot; two candle-stands, two fire-screens, two stools, two large looking-glasses and twenty-seven mahogany chairs comprised the wooden furniture. The window-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

curtains were valuable, as were also "two elegant lustres." Two silver-plated lamps contributed additional light, the floor was covered with a good mat, and among the ornaments were five China jars. The hearth-furniture was complete, and pictures and prints worth \$973 adorned the walls.



CHAIR FROM MOUNT VERNON AND PAINTED ROSEWOOD CARD-  
TABLE FROM PRESTWOULD

Now owned by the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va. See page 515.

The "Front Parlour" contained an expensive sofa and eleven mahogany chairs. The rest of the furniture consisted of a rich looking-glass and a tea-table. A handsome carpet and window-curtains gave an air of comfort, and the logs rested on bright andirons. Three lamps, two with mirrors, were not only for light, but were probably as ornamental as the five China flower-pots. There were many pictures on the walls.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

A looking-glass, a tea-table, a settee, ten Windsor chairs, a carpet, window-curtains, andirons, tongs and fender and pictures made the "little Parlour" comfortable.

There were two dining-tables and a tea-table in the "Dining-Room," a mahogany sideboard, two knife-cases and a large case, an oval looking-glass and ten mahogany chairs. Here we find a carpet and window-curtains and the usual hearth furniture and pictures.

In the "Bedroom," there is, of course, a bed, bedstead and mattress, a looking-glass, a small table, four mahogany or walnut chairs, window curtains and blinds, a carpet, andirons, etc., and one large picture.

In the "Passage," there are fourteen mahogany chairs, four images over the door, a spy-glass, a thermometer and pictures.

In the "Closet," we find a fire-screen, and "a machine to scrape shoes on"; and on the Verandah or "Piazza" there are thirty Windsor chairs.

A great number of prints are hung along the staircase, and a looking-glass is found in the passage on the second floor.

Passing into the "Front Room," we find the carpet and window-curtains and open fire that render every room so warm and comfortable, a bed, bedstead, and curtains, a dressing-table, a large looking-glass, a wash-basin and pitcher, and six mahogany chairs. Prints decorate the walls.

In the "Second Room," the bed, bedstead and curtains and window-curtains are first noticeable; the rest of the furniture consists of a looking-glass, a dressing-table, wash-basin and pitcher, an armchair and four chairs, a carpet, and andirons, etc. A portrait of General Lafayette hangs in this room.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The "Third Room" has, of course, its carpet, window-curtains and andirons, and a very fine bedstead, bed and curtains, a chest of drawers, six mahogany chairs, a looking-glass and wash-basin and pitcher. We also find prints on the walls.

A bed, bedstead and curtains, carpet and window-curtains, five mahogany chairs, a pine dressing-table, a large looking-glass, a close chair, wash-basin and pitcher, andirons and prints furnish the "Fourth Room."

In the "Small Room," we find a bed and bedstead, a dressing-table, a washstand, a dressing-glass and three Windsor chairs.

In the "Room which Mrs. Washington now keeps," there are a bed, bedsteads and mattress, an oval looking-glass, a fender, andirons, etc., a table, three chairs, and a carpet; and in "Mrs. Washington's old Room" we note a bed, bedstead and curtains, a glass, a dressing-table, a writing-table and a writing-chair, an easy-chair, two mahogany chairs, a chest of drawers, a time-piece, and pictures.

The "Study" contains quite an odd assortment of furniture and articles, consisting of a bureau, a tambour secretary, a walnut table, two pine writing-tables, a writing-desk and apparatus, a circular chair, an armchair, a dressing-table, an oval looking-glass, eleven spy-glasses, a case of surveying instruments, a globe, two brass candlesticks, seven swords and blades, four canes, seven guns, 44 lbs. 15 oz. of plate worth \$900, plated ware worth \$424, and many other articles.

The most noticeable feature of the furniture of *Mount Vernon* is the great number of chairs in the house, and the number of prints and pictures. Altogether there were 139 chairs worth \$658.50. The pictures and prints were

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

valued at \$2,008.25. The total value of the furniture at *Mount Vernon* equalled \$3,420. As the rooms in *Mount Vernon* are not by any means large, they must have been very crowded with the articles mentioned above. Where the clothing was kept is a mystery, as there are no presses or wardrobes in the inventory, and there are no closets in the house. Martha Washington's trunk, similar to the cylindrical one facing page 224, is in the Newark Historical Society. The size of the trunks makes us wonder, also, how the people of the period carried their silks and satins, wigs and furbelows from place to place.

A picture of one side of Washington's bedroom has already appeared as the frontispiece to our second chapter; the other side of the same room is shown facing this page. Here we find a comfortable armchair of the Louis Seize period; a small candlestand with "snake feet" and revolving top; a very early chair of the Chippendale period, as is evidenced by the simple square back and plain jar-shaped unperforated splat; a good mahogany library bookcase of the Chippendale school; a trunk that accompanied Washington on his campaigns; and a pair of simple brass andirons. All of these pieces were used by Washington. Two chair cushions embroidered by Mrs. Washington are also preserved here.

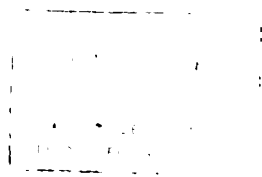
After Washington's death in 1799, the house remained intact for some years, but Mrs. Washington bequeathed the furniture to her four grand-children. Hence the household articles and relics were widely scattered; many pieces of furniture and other treasures have, fortunately, found their way back, some by gift and some by purchase, since the "Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union" was organized in 1856. The house with 200 acres was



WASHINGTON'S BEDROOM, MOUNT VERNON, VA.

*See page 508.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

bought by this society in 1858 from Mr. John A. Washington, Jr., and his heirs.

The house is now a museum of old furniture and relics, but there are comparatively few of the Washington possessions here. Among the original pieces of furniture, we may note: a Heppelwhite sideboard and an iron fireback with the Fairfax coat-of-arms bought from *Belvoir*, in the "Dining-Room"; clock and vases, silver bracket lamps, rose-wood flower-stands, a looking-glass, and an ornament for the dining-table in the "Banquet Hall"; a corner wash-hand stand in "Mrs. Washington's Room"; and a number of chairs that are scattered throughout the house. A globe, curtain cornices, and several prints and engravings that were originally in *Mount Vernon* have also been returned.

Washington was very particular about his household appointments, and was very receptive to the newest fashions. Soon after his arrival in New York, he had his silver plate melted down and reproduced in what were considered more elegant and harmonious forms. This was a very common practice; we have seen the same thing done a century before this (see page 43).

The President occupied the house in Cherry Street only nine months, as it was not sufficiently convenient. His new house was on Broadway near Bowling Green: for this he paid what was regarded as the extremely high rent of \$2,500 per annum. Entries in Washington's *Diary* show the minute care he took in household matters.

"Monday, Feb. 1, 1790. Agreed on Saturday last to take Mr. McCombs's house, lately occupied by the Minister of France, for one year from and after the first day of May next; and would go into it immediately, if Mr. Otto,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the present possessor, could be accommodated; and this day sent my Secretary to examine the rooms to see how my furniture could be adapted to the respective apartments."

"Wednesday, 3d. Visited the apartments in the house of Mr. McCombs—made a disposition of the rooms—fixed on some furniture of the Minister's (which was to be sold, and was well adapted to particular public rooms)—and directed additional stables to be built."

"Saturday, 13th. Walked in the forenoon to the house to which I am about to remove. Gave directions for the arrangement of the furniture, etc., and had some of it put up."

"Tuesday, 16th. Rode to my intended habitation, and gave some directions respecting the arrangement of the furniture."

"Saturday, 20th. Set seriously about removing my furniture to my new house. Two of the gentlemen of the family had their beds taken there, and would sleep there to-night."

"Tuesday, 23rd. After dinner, Mrs. Washington, myself and children removed, and lodged at our new habitation."

"Wednesday, 24th. Employed in arranging matters about the house and fixing matters."

"Thursday, 25th. Engaged as yesterday."

One of the pieces of furniture that Washington bought from the French Minister was a bureau which was afterwards an object of special bequest. In his will we read: "To my companion in arms and old and intimate friend, Dr. Craik, I give my beureau (or as cabinet-makers call it, tambour secretary), and the circular chair, an appendage of my study."



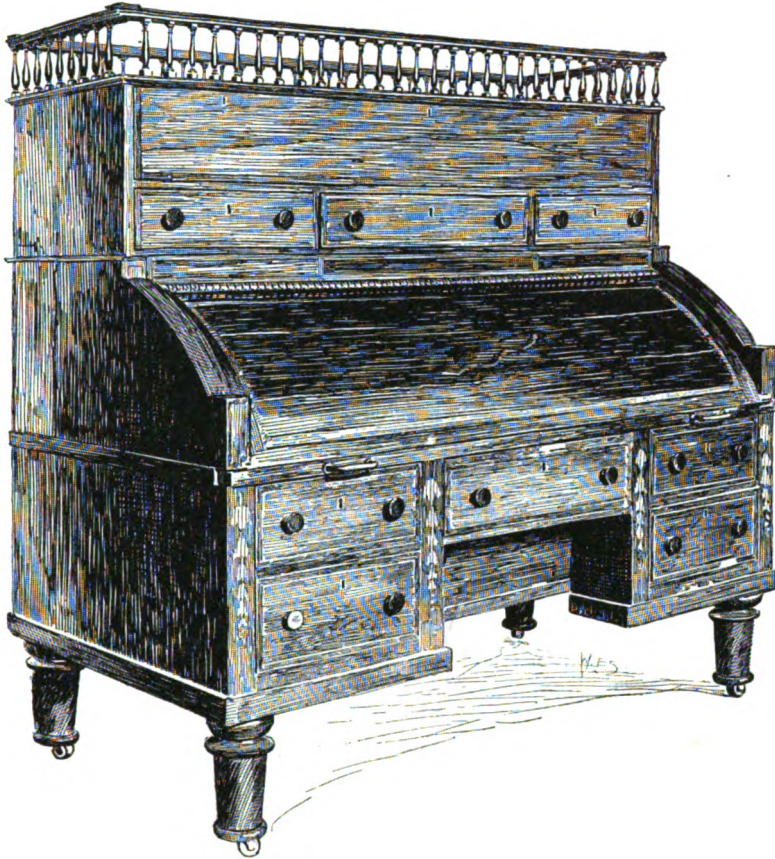
**MAHOGANY SOFA**

*Owned by Dr. Herman V. Mynders, Schenectady, N. Y. See page 540.*

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Whether the large mahogany desk that appears on this page is the one referred to above, we do not know ; but it is certain that Washington used this from 1789 to 1797.



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S DESK

Now owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. See this page.

It is clumsy but very commodious, and the only pretence to ornament is the turned balusters at the top and the bell-flower, which is unusually large and ungraceful, framing the lower drawers. This is inlaid in satin-wood. Above the lower drawers are two metal handles, which, when

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

pulled forward, draw out a slab for writing, and the cylindrical top rolls upward out of sight, like the ordinary office desk of to-day. This piece of furniture is now owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

When the seat of government removed from New York to Philadelphia, the President leased the house that had successively been occupied by Richard Penn, General Howe, Benedict Arnold, Holkar, the French consul, and Robert Morris. In his directions to his secretary, Washington writes :

“ Mr. and Mrs. Morris have insisted upon leaving the two large looking-glasses which are in their best rooms because they have no place, they say, proper to remove them to, and because they are unwilling to hazard the taking of them down. You will, therefore, let them have instead, the choice of mine: the large ones I purchased of the French minister they do not incline to take, but will be glad of some of the others. They will also leave a large glass lamp in the entry or hall, and will take one or more of my glass lamps in lieu of it. . . . Mrs. Morris has a mangle \* (I think it is called) for ironing clothes, which, as it is fixed in the place where it is commonly used, she proposes to leave and take mine. To this, I have no objection, provided mine is equally good and convenient; but if I should obtain any advantages besides that of its being up and ready for use, I am not inclined to receive it.

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\* It is interesting to note that seven years before this, a mangle had been a novelty to Washington. An entry in his *Diary* (September 3, 1787) reads: “ Phila.—In Convention . . . visited a machine at Dr. Franklin’s (called a mangle) for pressing in place of ironing clothes from the wash—which machine from the facility with which it despatches business is well calculated for tablecloths, and such articles as have not pleats and irregular foldings, and would be very useful in all large families.” He evidently bought one soon.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“ I have no particular direction to give respecting the appropriation of the furniture. By means of the bow windows the back rooms will become the largest, and, of course, will receive the furniture of the largest dining- and drawing-rooms, and in that case, though there are no clos-



CHAIR FROM WASHINGTON'S PRESIDENTIAL MANSION, PHILADELPHIA  
Now owned by the Historical Society of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. See page 514-15.

ets in them, there are some in the steward's room, directly opposite, which are not inconvenient. There is a small room adjoining the kitchen, that might, if it is not essential for other purposes, be appropriated for the Sèvres china, and other things of that sort, which are not in common use. Mrs. Morris, who is a notable lady in family arrangements, can give you much information on all the conveniences about the house and buildings, and I dare say would



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

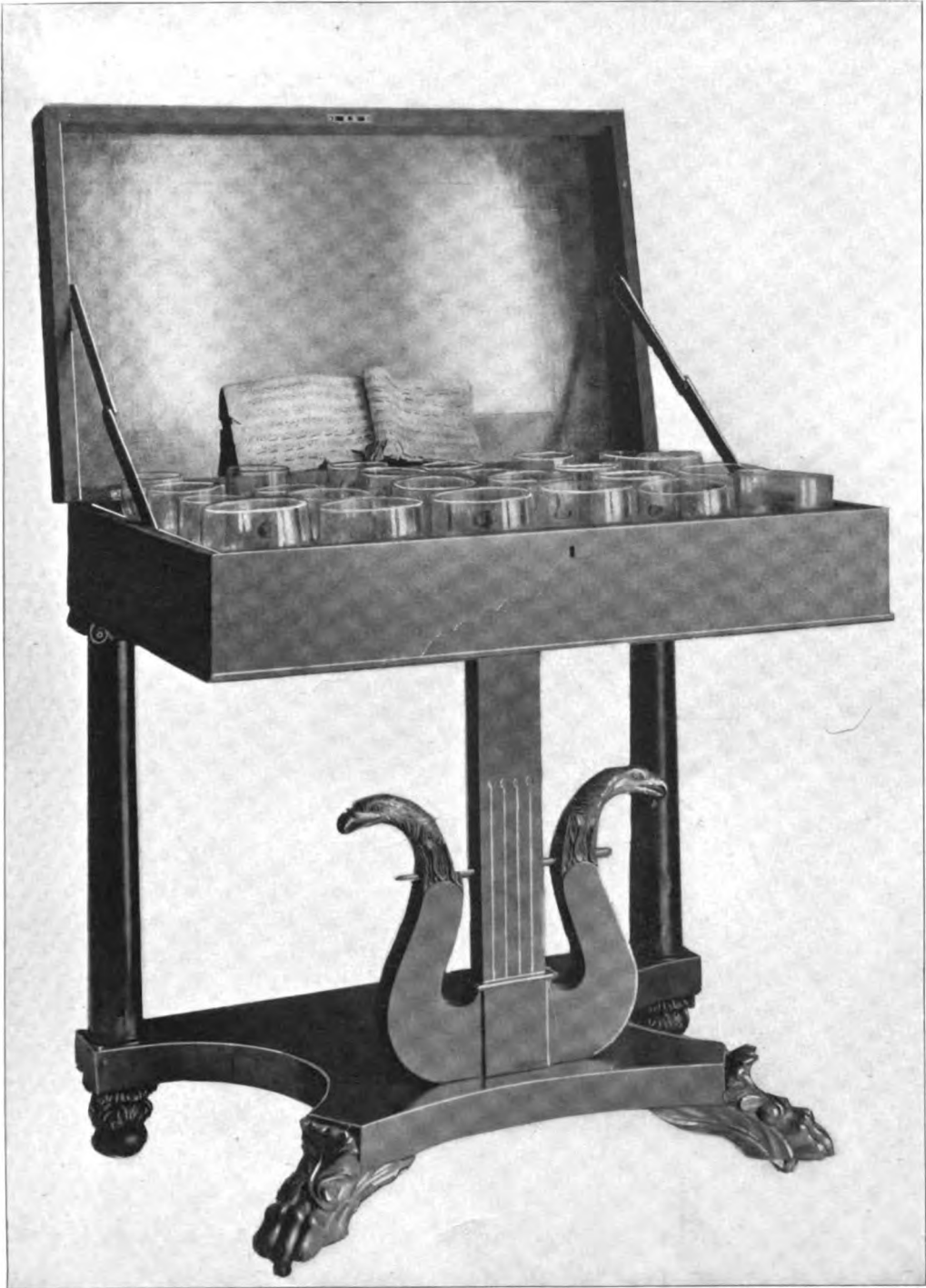
rather consider it a compliment to be consulted in those matters, than a trouble to give her opinion of them.

“I approve, at least till inconvenience or danger shall appear, of the large table ornaments remaining on the side-board, and of the pagodas standing in the smallest drawing-room. Had I delivered my sentiments from here respecting this fixture, that is the apartment I should have named for it. Whether the green, which you have, or a new yellow curtain, should be appropriated to the staircase above the hall, may depend on your getting an exact match, in colour, and so forth of the latter. For the sake of appearances one would not in instances of this kind, regard a small additional expense.”

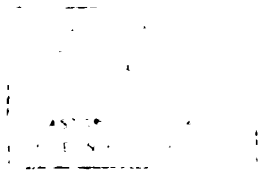
An account of a visit to this house is given by Thomas Twining, who writes :

“At one o'clock to-day I called at General Washington's with the picture and letter I had for him. He lived in a small red brick house on the left side of High Street, not much higher up than Fourth Street. There was nothing in the exterior of the house that denoted the rank of its possessor. Next door was a hair-dresser. Having stated my object to a servant who came to the door, I was conducted up a neat but rather narrow staircase carpeted in the middle, and was shown into a middling-sized, well-furnished drawing-room on the left of the passage. Nearly opposite the door was the fireplace, with a wood fire in it. The floor was carpeted. On the left of the fireplace was a sofa which sloped across the room. There were no pictures on the walls, no ornaments on the chimney-piece. Two windows on the right of the entrance looked into the street.”

On page 513 appears a chair that was in the Presi-

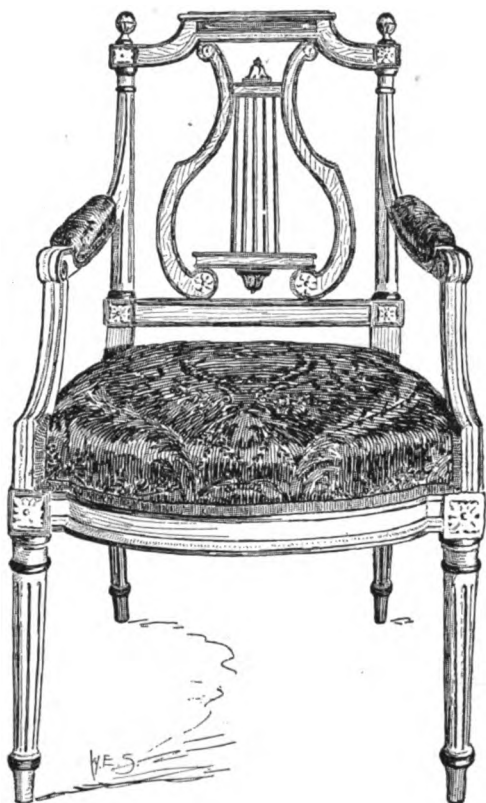


MUSICAL GLASSES IN MAHOGANY FRAME  
*Owned by Mrs. John Tayloe Perrin, Baltimore, Md. See page 523.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

dential Mansion in Philadelphia. It is a good example of the Louis Seize period. It is painted white and gilt, while the upholstery is of white brocade sprinkled with flowers of bright hue. This valuable chair is now owned



CHAIR GIVEN BY GEORGE WASHINGTON TO READ  
Owned by his descendant, Mr. H. Pumpelly Read, Albany, N. Y. See page 516.

by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Another chair owned by Washington is seen on page 505. This is of the Heppelwhite school. What the wood is we cannot tell, for it is painted white. The seat is orange plush. The chair was originally in *Mount Vernon*, but is now owned by the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va.

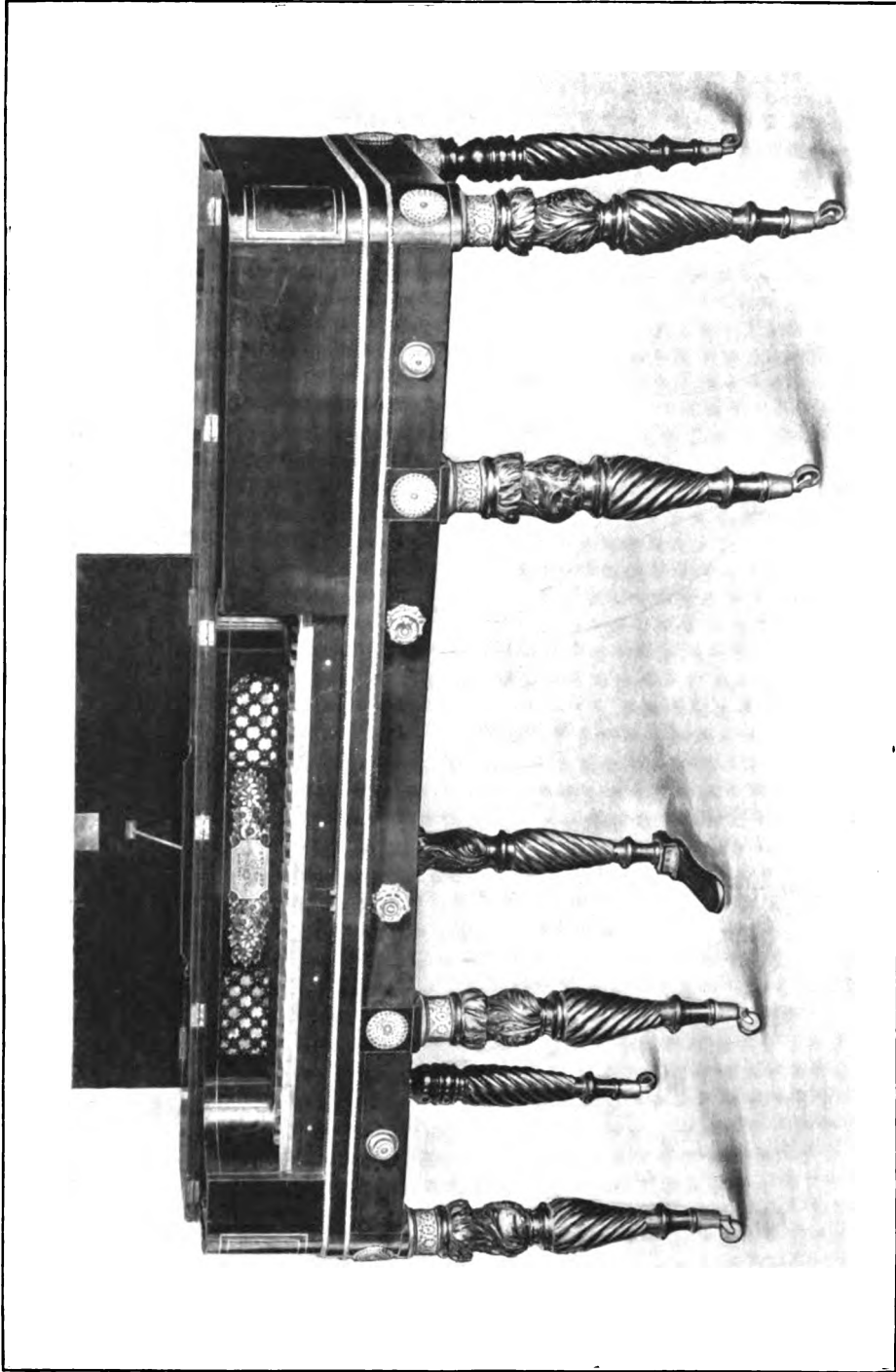
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Other specimens of furniture from *Mount Vernon* appear on page 119 and page 123.

Washington was not only fond of furnishing his own home, but sometimes gave presents of furniture to his friends. On page 515 is represented a chair that he gave to George Read, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and which is now owned by the latter's descendant, Mr. H. Pumpelly Read of Albany, N. Y. It is in the Sheraton style with fluted legs and the lyre-back, which was so popular in the Louis Seize period and so frequently used by Sheraton. This has been restored according to tradition, and is painted white picked out with gold.

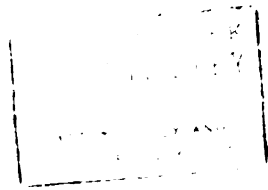
Scarcely second in interest to *Mount Vernon* is *Monticello*, the home of Thomas Jefferson, though its remoteness makes it practically inaccessible to the patriotic tourist. All the distinguished foreigners who came to this country and recorded their impressions have left glowing accounts of the house, its beautiful situation among the Blue Ridge Mountains, and its hospitable owner. Levasseur, who accompanied Lafayette on his visit there in 1825, thus describes the mansion:

“The hospitality of Mr. Jefferson is proverbial, his house is constantly open, not only to numerous visitors from the neighbourhood, but also to all the foreign travellers who were attracted by curiosity or the very natural desire of seeing and conversing with the sage of *Monticello*. The dwelling is built in the figure of an irregular octagon, with porticoes at the east and west, and peristyles on the north and south. Its extent comprising the peristyles and porticoes is about 110 feet by 90; the exterior is in the Doric order, and surmounted by balustrades. The interior of the house is ornamented in the different orders of architecture,



**PIANOFORTE**

*Made in New York; now owned by the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va. See pages 527-8.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

except the composite; the vestibule is Doric; the dining-room, Doric; the drawing-room, Corinthian; and the dome, Attic. The chambers are ornamented in the different forms of these orders in true proportion as given by Palladio. Throughout this delightful dwelling are to be found proofs of the good taste of the proprietor, and of his enlightened love for the arts. His parlour is ornamented by a beautiful collection of paintings, among which we remarked with pleasure an Ascension by Poussin, a holy family by Raphael; a flagellation of Christ by Rubens, and a crucifixion by Guido. In the dining-room were four beautiful busts of Washington, Franklin, Lafayette and Paul Jones. There were also some other fine pieces of sculpture in different parts of the house. The library, without being extensive, is well selected; but what especially excites the curiosity of visitors is the rich museum situated at the entrance of the house. This extensive and excellent collection consists of offensive and defensive arms, dresses, ornaments, and utensils of different savage tribes of North America."

We have no means of forming an exact idea of the contents of each of the rooms in *Monticello*, because, in his will, Jefferson departed from the usual custom: "In consequence of the variety and indescribability of the articles of property within the house of *Monticello*, and the difficulty of inventorying and appraising them separately and specifically, and its inutility, I dispense with having them inventoried and appraised." In 1815, however, Jefferson had drawn up a list of his taxable property in Albemarle County. At that date the household furniture consisted of: "4 clocks, 1 bureau or secretary (mahogany), 2 book cases do., 4 chests of drawers, do., 1 side board with



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

doors and drawers (mahogany), 8 separate parts of dining table do., 13 tea and card tables, do., 6 sophas with gold leaf, 36 chairs (mahogany), 44 do. gold leaf, 11 pr. window curtains foreign, 16 portraits in oil, 1 do. crayon, 64 pictures, prints and engravings, with frames more than 12 in., 39 do. under 12 in. with gilt frames, 3 looking glasses 5 ft. long, 13 do. 4 ft. and not 5 ft., 1 do. 3 ft. and not 4 ft., 2 do. 2 ft. and not 3 ft., 1 harpischord, 2 silver watches, 2 silver coffee pots, 3 plated urns and coffee pots, 13 plated candlesticks, 4 cut glass decanters, 10 silver cups.”

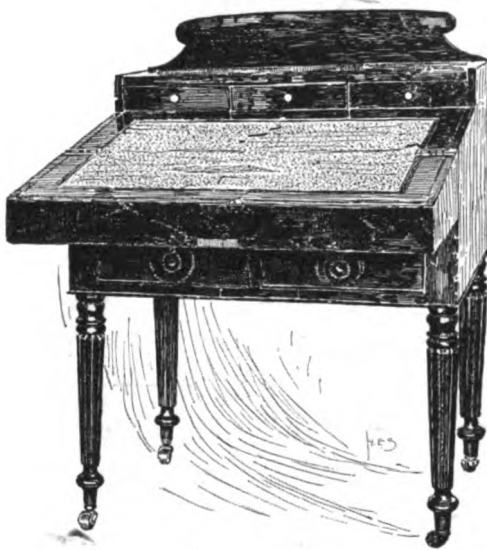
The mahogany bureau or secretary mentioned above appears on page 519. It now belongs to Miss Eva Marshall Thomas of Richmond, Va., and was purchased at the *Monticello* sale by Governor Gilmer. Colonel John Russell Jones from Albemarle, Va., was also a bidder. At the sale of Governor Gilmer's effects, Colonel Jones was enabled to gain possession of it, and through him it descended to Miss Thomas.

It is interesting to find that Jefferson's keen intellect recognized that objects associated with the genesis of the United States were likely to become intensely interesting on that account, and that he regarded such a reverential attitude of mind as entirely proper, as the following correspondence published in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* proves.

He writes to his grand-daughter, Ellen W. Coolidge, from *Monticello*, November 14, 1825: “I received a letter from a friend in Philadelphia lately, asking information of the house, and room of the house there, in which the Declaration of Independence was written, with a view to future celebrations of the 4th of July in it; another enquir-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ing whether a paper given to the Philosophical Society there, as a rough draught of that Declaration was genuinely so. A society is formed there lately for an annual celebration of the advent of Penn to that place. It was held in his antient mansion, and the chair in which he actually sate when at his writing table was presented by a lady



THOMAS JEFFERSON'S DESK  
Owned by Miss Eva Marshall Thomas, Richmond, Va. See page 518.

owning it, and was occupied by the president of the celebration. Two other chairs were given them, made of the elm under the shade of which Penn had made his first treaty with the Indians. If these things acquire a superstitious value because of their connection with particular persons, surely a connection with the great Charter of our Independence may give a value to what has been associated with that; and such was the idea of the enquirers after the room in which it was written. Now I happen still to possess the writing-box on which it was written. It was made from

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

a drawing of my own by Ben. Randall, a cabinet-maker in whose house I took my first lodgings on my arrival in Philadelphia in May, 1777, and I have used it ever since. It claims no merit of particular beauty. It is plain, neat, convenient, and, taking no more room on the writing-table than a moderate 4to volume, it yet displays itself sufficiently for any writing. Mr. Coolidge must do me the favour of accepting this. Its imaginary value will increase with years, and if he lives to my age, or another half-century, he may see it carried in the procession of our nation's birthday, as relics of the Saints are in those of the Church. I will send it thro' Col. Peyton, and hope with better fortune than that for which it is to be a substitute." \*

Mr. Joseph Coolidge's reply was as follows:

"The desk arrived safely, furnished with a precious document which adds very greatly to its value; for the same hand which, half a century ago, traced upon it the words which have gone abroad upon the earth, now attests its authenticity and consigns it to myself. When I think of the desk 'in connection with the great charter of our independence,' I feel a sentiment almost of awe, and approach it with respect; but when I remember that it has served you fifty years, been the faithful depository of your cherished thoughts, that upon it have been written your letters to illustrious and excellent men, good plans for the advancement of civil and religious liberty and of art and science, that it has, in fact, been the companion of your studies and the instrument of diffusing their results, that it has been a witness of a philosophy which calumny

\* This desk was presented to the United States by the heirs of Mr. Joseph Coolidge. (See *Proceedings* in the Senate and House of Representatives, April 23, 1880, on the Occasion of the Presentation of Thomas Jefferson's writing-desk.)



WEST PARLOUR, MOUNT VERNON  
*See page 503.*

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATION

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

could not subdue, and of an enthusiasm which eighty winters have not chilled,—I would fain consider it as no longer inanimate and mute, but as something to be interrogated and caressed.”

Another desk belonging to one of the makers of American history appears on page 491. This is a simple mahogany desk originally owned by President Madison and now the property of Mrs. George Ben Johnston, Richmond, Va.

It is well known how fond of music Thomas Jefferson was. He not only played the violin, but he seems to have been alive to all the new inventions.

While visiting Philadelphia in 1800, Thomas Jefferson writes to his daughter: “A very ingenious, modest and poor young man in Philadelphia, has invented one of the prettiest improvements in the pianoforte that I have seen, and it has tempted me to engage one for *Monticello*. His strings are perpendicular, and he contrives within that height to give his strings the same length as in a grand pianoforte, and fixes the three unisons to the same screw. It scarcely gets out of tune at all, and then, for the most part, the three unisons are tuned at once.”

This must have been similar to the keyed harp which J. A. Guttwaldt, 75 Maiden Lane, advertises in the *Evening Post*, in 1818, as “a musical instrument that perfectly equals the harp in sound, and far surpasses it in point of easy treatment, as it is played like the piano, by means of keys, and consequently has all the advantages of brilliant modulation; the only one in the United States.” This instrument was, undoubtedly, the piano-harp, which is sometimes erroneously called harpsichord.

Jefferson's interest in music never abated. We find his

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

grand-daughter, Ellen W. Coolidge, writing to him from Boston on December 26, 1825: "I have written a long letter and in great part by candle-light, but I cannot close without saying that the brandy, etc., will be shipped in about a week along with a piano built for Virginia in this town, a very beautiful piece of workmanship, and doing, I think, great credit to the young mechanic whom we employed, and whose zeal was much stimulated by the knowledge that his work would pass under your eye. The tones of the instrument are fine, and its interior structure compares most advantageously with that of the English-built pianos, having, we think, a decided superiority. The manufacturer believes that it will be to his advantage to have it known that he was employed in such a work for you, or what amounts to the same thing, for one of your family, living under your roof. Willard, the clock-maker, is, as I mentioned before, very solicitous to have the making of the time-piece for the University, has already begun it (*upon his own responsibility* and knowing the circumstances of the case, as we have taken care to mislead or deceive him in nothing), and wishes to be informed exactly as to the dimensions of the room in which the clock is to stand."

Thomas Jefferson replies from *Monticello*, May 19, 1826: "The pianoforte is also in place, and Mrs. Carey *happening* here has exhibited to us its full powers, which are indeed great. Nobody slept the 1st night, nor is the tumult yet over on this the 3rd day of its *emplacement*."

In 1824, we find in the *New York Evening Post* an advertisement that a Mr. Cartwright will perform on the "Musical Glasses" at 63 Liberty Street, and that the selections will be "English, Scotch and Irish melodies." This

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

brings to our notice an interesting instrument that was very popular in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is known by the name of Harmonicon as well as that of Musical Glasses. A very handsome specimen of this appears facing page 514.

The twenty-four glasses are shaped like ordinary finger-bowls, except that they are fastened into the sounding-board by means of short stems. Each glass contains on the front the letter of the note it gives when the wet finger is applied to it. The glasses are placed in four rows of six glasses each.

This curious instrument also forms an interesting piece of furniture. Its frame and case are mahogany. The arrangement of its two back pillars suggests the console table. The box containing the glasses rests upon these and is supported in the front by a lyre terminating in beautifully carved eagles' heads. The strings on the lyre are inlaid brass. The fanciful shaped base stands upon lions' claws, while beneath the pillars the ball and acanthus leaf occur. This Harmonicon was originally owned by Mrs. John Prosser of Gloucester County, Va., who bought it about eighty years ago. It became the property of her daughter, Mrs. John Tabb of *White Marsh*, Va., and descended through her son, Dr. John Prosser Tabb, to his daughter, Mrs. John Tayloe Perrin of Baltimore. It was played for the entertainment of Gen. Robert E. Lee when he visited *White Marsh* in 1866.

These instruments are quite rare, though occasionally they are seen in museums devoted to musical curiosities. A similar instrument is owned by Mr. Henry Kellogg of Lutherville, Md., and another by Mr. E. G. Butler of Dabney, N. C.



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

What we particularly notice regarding musical instruments at the period under review is the continued popularity of the harpsichord and the introduction and popularity of its successor, the pianoforte. The latter is a much older instrument than is commonly supposed. Its origin is usually attributed to Cristofori, a harpsichord-maker of Padua, and the date of its appearance, 1709. The name, however, is traced to 1598. Until 1760, all pianos were made in the wing-shape, which we now call "grands," but in that year, Zumpe, a German maker, introduced the "square." It was also about 1760 that twelve skilful German workmen went to London, became associated with the Broadwoods, and have since been known as "the twelve apostles" of piano-making. One of them was John Geib, the inventor of the "grass-hopper action," whose sons became conspicuous in New York. William Southall of Dublin patented a "cabinet" or "upright" in 1807; but in 1794 the same maker, "with the addition of treble keys," gave the piano six octaves—from F to F. "Pianos with additional keys" are frequently advertised in the New York newspapers from this time onward. In 1797, "Michael Canshut, Forte Piano-maker," has "just finished an elegant well-toned Grand Forte piano with additional keys and double-bridged sounding board—the first of the kind ever made in this city." This was probably Mr. Southall's patent. The London makers soon begin to send instruments to America, and it is not long before branch houses or new manufactories are established in various parts of the United States. One of these dealers was John Jacob Astor, who began to import pianos to this country about 1763. In 1783, he sailed for Baltimore, with some flutes, but fell in with a fur dealer, which chance led him



**LADY'S WRITING-DESK**

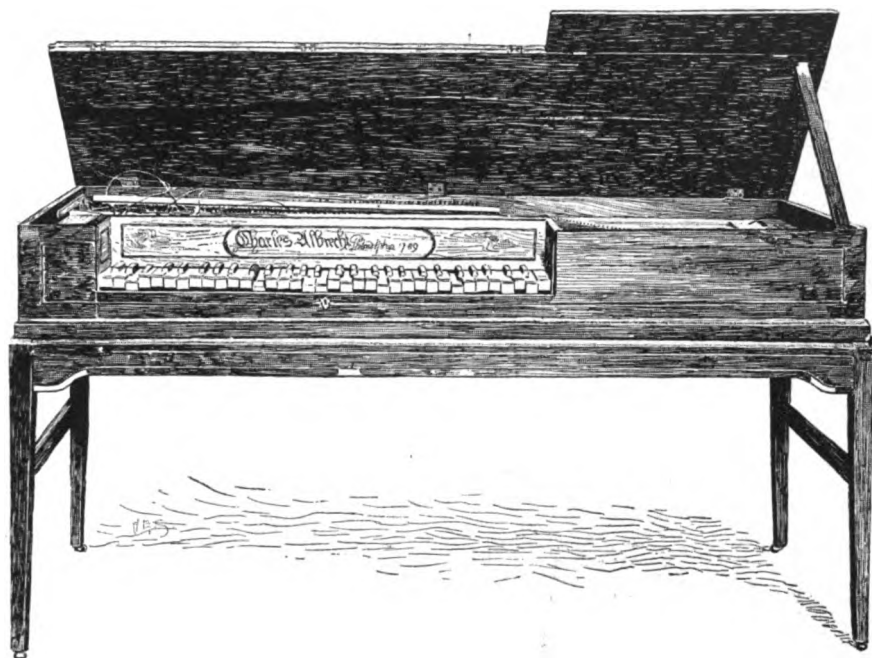
*Owned by Charles B. Tiernan, Esq , Baltimore, Md. See pages 532-3.*

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1900

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

into the fur business. He exported furs and imported pianos until furs absorbed all of his energies. He was succeeded about 1802 by John and Michael Paff.

Another early maker was Charles Albrecht, who made pianos in Philadelphia before 1789, the date upon the ex-



PIANOFORTE

Made by Charles Albrecht, Philadelphia, 1789; in the collection of the Historical Society of Philadelphia, Pa. See below.

ample owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and represented on this page. The case is perfectly simple and of no special interest. It will be seen that this has only four octaves and four keys, and the fact that it has no pedals shows that it is an exceedingly primitive instrument.

In 1801, J. Hewitt, 59 Maiden Lane, sells "grand pianofortes, uprights and longways, with additional keys,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

square ditto with or without additional keys"; and he also has "organs, violins, violoncellos, bows, kits, flutes, clarinets, hoboys, horns, bassoons, carillons, and Roman strings, etc."

In 1802, music and musical instruments could be purchased from George Gilfert, 177 Broadway, and in the same year John and Michael Paff, 127 Broadway, advertise "50 square patent to F, with additional keys to F F; 2 grand pianofortes, a harpsichord, and an upright grand pianoforte"; and in 1806 they advertise "two very elegant Satten Wood pianofortes." Gibson and Davis, 58 Warren Street, also sold pianofortes for a great many years from 1803. D. Mazzinghi, 11 Murray Street, advertises in 1803 "pianofortes from London, made by Astor, Bell, and Clementi."

In 1816, John Paff has some pianofortes from London, costing from \$200 to \$300. For grand upright pianos, in 1817, you could "inquire at Mr. Phyfe's Cabinet Warehouse, Fulton Street"; and, in the same year, John and Adam Geib & Co. advertise a "superb musical clock manufactured in Paris, which plays a large variety of the best music, set on six barrels, and is united with a first-rate time-piece. It is perhaps superior to anything of the kind imported into the United States; being valued at thirteen hundred dollars; and is offered for sale at that price, or will be exhibited to any Lady or Gentleman who will honour the above firm with a call at their Piano Forte warehouse and wholesale and retail music store, No. 23 Maiden Lane."

The two Geibs just mentioned were among the most important of the early pianoforte-makers in New York. They were the sons of John Geib, already spoken of on

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

page 524. We find them in New York, at 23 Maiden Lane, selling pianos made by Geib, Broadwood, Astor, and Clementi. The name Geib appears early in the New York newspapers. John Geib and Son (1807) "respectfully inform the public and the lovers of the arts that they have just constructed a Forte Piano on a new plan, it having 4 pedals: 1st, the Harp; 2d, the Bassoon; 3d, the Full Chorus: 4th, the Swell, to which they invite the curious and ingenious, hoping it will meet their approbation." In 1821, J. H. and W. Geib have for sale "a large and handsome assortment of Piano Fortes of the latest fashion, and of superior tone and workmanship, among which are many made by Clementi and Co. and Astor and Co. of London." These were for sale at their wholesale and retail store, 23 Maiden Lane.

In 1822, A. & W. Geib have removed from 23 Maiden Lane to their manufactory, Greenwich, in Barton Street; and in 1823, A. & W. Geib "have reopened their store, 23 Maiden Lane, where they offer an extensive assortment of pianofortes of their own manufacture, also some by Clementi and Broadwood." They have an executor's sale in the same year of articles belonging to the estate of John Geib, consisting of two elegant superior toned Clementi's pianos, one do., round end pillar and claw; one do. doz. rosewood do. and two square and common do." In 1825 A. and W. Geib have at their "pianoforte warehouse, 23 Maiden Lane," "two very elegant rosewood pianofortes just from the manufactory."

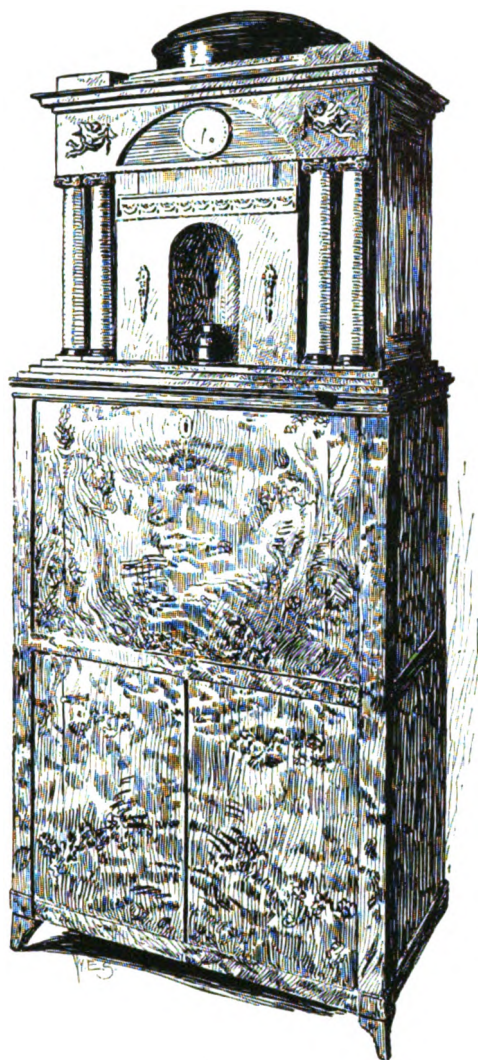
This firm disappears from the New York directories in 1828, when William removes "up-town" to Eleventh Street. Therefore, the very handsome pianoforte that faces page 516, bearing the inscription: "New Patent, A. and

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

W. Geib, 23 Maiden Lane, New York," must have been made between the years 1823 and 1828, and may indeed have been one of the rosewood pianos advertised in 1825. This must have been in its day a very excellent instrument. It is now a very beautiful piece of furniture. The case is made of extremely handsome rosewood and is ornamented with two bands of ornate brasswork. The name-plate is surrounded by a cluster of daisies and morning-glories painted with that green metallic colouring that at this period was used so universally to decorate the backs of the "Fancy Chair." On either side of these flowers is a latticework, each square of which is carved and is decorated in the centre with a golden dot. Behind the latticework is a piece of sapphire velvet. A thin gold thread is painted above this decoration and again appears on the outside at the rounded ends where it forms a square. Below the two bands of metal and above the legs, three drawers will be noticed. The little drawers at the ends are furnished with one handsome brass knob, and each is lined with red velvet. The central drawer has two knobs. Above each of the legs a very elaborate medallion forms not only a decoration, but is evidently a necessity for hiding the screw or pin by which the leg is held to the body of the instrument. Such ornaments are invariably seen on the legs of the high-post bedsteads. The six legs of this piano are turned and carved with the acanthus in high relief, and above the carving an ornate band of delicately chiselled brass contributes an additional ornament. In the centre and a little to the left is the pedal, and it is interesting to compare this with the pedals on the harpsichord represented on page 501. The piano on page 525 has no pedals.

We have already seen that musical and chiming-clocks

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



SECRETARY GIVEN BY JOSEPH BONAPARTE TO STEPHEN GIRARD  
Now in Girard College, Philadelphia. See page 530.

were in vogue before the Revolution (see pages 303-4). In 1776, we find an advertisement that "Mervin Perry repeating and plain Clock and Watchmaker from London, where he has improved himself under the most eminent and



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

capital artists in those branches, has opened shop in Hanover Square at the Sign of the Dial. He mends and repairs musical, repeating, quarterly, chime, silent pull and common weight clocks."

Clocks with automata are sometimes imported. For example :

George J. Warner, 10 Liberty Street, in 1795, has "two musical chamber clocks, with moving figures, which play four tunes each on two sets of elegantly well-toned bells, and show the hour, minute, and day of the week." Musical clocks with figures, and cuckoo clocks, could be had at Kerner and Paff's, 245 Water Street (1796); Edward Meeks, Jr., 114 Maiden Lane, "has eight-day clocks and chiming time-pieces" (1796).

In 1815-16, Stolenwerck and Brothers have for sale at 157 Broadway "a superb musical cabinet or Panharmonicon combined with a secretary and clock. The music, which goes by weights in the manner of a clock, consists of a selection of the finest pieces by the most celebrated composers, and is perfect. On opening the door of the Secretary a beautiful colonnade of alabaster pillars with gilded capitals and bases is displayed. The whole is about 7 feet high, surmounted with a marble figure of Urania leaning on a globe, round which a zone revolves and indicates the hours. It was made at Berlin in Prussia, and cost \$1,500."

This must have been somewhat similar to the secretary shown on page 529, a present from Joseph Bonaparte to Stephen Girard, and now in Girard College, Philadelphia. This is of satin wood ornamented with *ormoulu*. The columns are of marble with brass capitals. In the centre of the arch, a clock is placed, and the secretary is equipped

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

with a fine 'musical box. A similar piece of furniture is owned by Theodore B. Woolsey, Esq., New York.

Occasionally a valuable and rare specimen finds its way across the Atlantic. In 1801, David F. Launay, watchmaker, No. 9 Warren Street, has "a high finished clock which decorated the library of the late King of France, made by Charles Bertrand of the Royal Academy; its original price, 5,000 livres; to be sold for 500 dollars"; and in 1817, Ruffier & Co., importers of French Dry Goods, 142 Broadway, advertise, "bronze clock work, a large monument, in Bronze and Gilt ornaments, erected to the honour of the brave who fell in the ever memorable Battle of Waterloo, June the 18th, 1815," and "Statue of the Emperor Napoleon in imitation of that placed at the top of the column, erected at the Place Vendôme in Paris, on a marble pedestal, ornamented with gilt and of a fine execution."

However, it must not be imagined that the tall clock has disappeared. Facing page 540 is represented one with a case of cherry neatly inlaid. This was made in Connecticut about 1800, and is now owned by Mr. Walter Hosmer, Wethersfield, Conn. On the same plate is a variety of clock that has become very common. It is frequently called the "banjo clock." This specimen, which belongs to Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn., is about three feet long. The square base in which, of course, the pendulum swings, is about twelve inches square. The pictures that decorate the front are painted on glass, and the framework is gilt.

Joseph Bonfanti, 305 Broadway, advertises in 1823, "German clocks some plain with music and some with moving figures," and French clocks "some with music and

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

will play different tunes," also "ladies' musical work-boxes and musical snuff-boxes." All sorts of novelties could be purchased at Joseph Bonfanti's shop, and in 1824 he constantly endeavours to attract customers by verses proclaiming his wares. For example:

*" Large elegant time-pieces playing sweet tunes,  
And cherry stones too that hold ten dozen spoons,  
And clocks that chime sweetly on nine little bells,  
And boxes so neat ornamented with shells.*

\* \* \*

*" His drawing-room ornaments whiter than plaster,  
A beautiful stuff which is called alabaster;  
For beauty and elegance nothing surpasses,  
Arranged on the chimney-piece in front of the glasses.*

\* \* \*

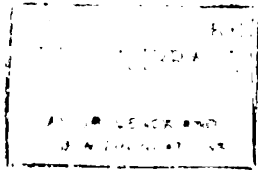
*" Here ladies may buy musical work-boxes gay,  
Which while they sit working will prettily play;  
Superb magic lanterns and tea-trays japanned,  
Hair lockets, steel watch chains, quills, wafers and sand."*

We have noted the many kinds of furniture specially designed by Sheraton for ladies, and naturally the American papers from about 1810 onward frequently advertise work-tables, letter-cases, work-boxes, etc., and these are often furnished with musical boxes, such as Bonfanti describes, and clocks. The work-table, with its drawers, its compartments for small articles and its pouch, was found in every household. We have given two examples on pages 481 and 483. The letter-case was a desk that partook somewhat of the form of a screen and could be conveniently moved in front of the fire. One, now in *Mount Vernon*, appears on page 119 and another on page 473. A lady's desk, very similar in shape, facing page 524, belongs to Charles B. Tiernan, Esq., Baltimore, Md., and was im-



**MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD**

*Owned by Mrs. Charles S. Fairchild, Cazenovia, N. Y. See page 536.*



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ported from Europe for his mother. The drawers are delicately inlaid with ivory in conventional garlands and are furnished with very small ivory knobs. The ornamental head of the desk contains a musical box and clock.

The work-table shown on this page is interesting as a piece of furniture and on account of its history. It was designed for the charming Lady Blessington, by her admirer, Count d'Orsay, and stood in the drawing-room at *Gore House* for several years, before misfortune visited it. When Lady Blessington fled to France, the sheriff seized the furniture and held a sale at *Gore House*. This work-table was purchased by Mr. Featherstonhaugh, who brought it to America. It is now owned by his son, Mr. George W. Featherstonhaugh, in Schenectady, N. Y.

The table is of a peculiar, vase-shaped form, and is but thirty inches high. It is eighteen inches across the top, which opens back upon a hinge, revealing a well surrounded by nine small compartments for small articles. The exterior is of hard polished wood, inlaid all over with wreaths of roses and forget-me-nots and birds. The colours of the leaves and petals of the flowers, as well as the feathers of the birds, are executed in variously coloured woods. The beautiful and delicate marquetry, as well as the graceful design, render this a most valuable and curious piece of cabinet-work.



LADY BLESSINGTON'S WORK-  
TABLE

Owned by Mr. George W. Featherstonhaugh, Schenectady, N. Y. See this page.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

During the Revolution, New York being in the hands of the British, the city retained its character as a busy mart, though, of course, importations of furniture were not as extensive as in times of peace. The New York newspapers contain frequent notices of auctions of household goods by returning officers and other officials and gentry. In 1780, the following advertisement appeared in the *New York Gazette*, and is typical of many:

“All the elegant, useful and ornamental house furniture of a gentleman going to England, viz., a variety of plate, china and glass, mahogany chairs, tables, desks, bureaux, sideboard and cellaret, mahogany bedsteads, with rich damask harrateen and copper-plate furniture and window curtains to match, very best feather beds and bedding, elegant carpets, looking-glasses, cases of knives and forks, table linen, fuzee and bayonet, silver-mounted pistols, handsome swords, perspective glasses, a prime violin of the softest tone, an iron chest, Madeira and claret wine, arrack, a number of books, brass andirons, and all kinds of kitchen furniture.”

The above mention of sideboard and cellaret reminds us that the sideboard was just coming into fashion, taking the place of the plain sideboard-table. Examples of Hoppelwhite and Sheraton sideboards have been given in the last chapter, and on page 535 is another specimen from the Gansevoort home, *Whiteball*, which was the headquarters of the British Governor in Albany. The knife-boxes, with the knives, standing upon it and the cellaret below, are of the same date and belong to it. These articles are now owned by Mr. Leonard Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

Sideboards are frequently advertised in New York, the wine-cooler or cellaret often receives special mention. In

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

1808, "Egyptian wine-coolers" are introduced. This was "an entirely new patent cooler, very elegantly press'd with



MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD, KNIFE-BOXES AND CELLARET, FROM WHITE-HALL, THE GANSEVOORT HOME

Owned by Mr. Leonard Ten Eyck. See page 534.

superb figures, and undoubtedly the very best thing ever used for the purpose. It is made of the finest clay unglaz'd, is of a salmon colour, and a handsome ornament to any dining-table."



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The specimen facing page 532 is a fine example of native workmanship. It was made in New York in 1807 for the alcove in which it stands. This piece of furniture, as well as the house, *Lorenzo*, built at Cazenovia, New York, by John Lincklaen in 1807, is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Fairchild. It is of mahogany. The capitals of the pillars and the claw feet are well carved and the ring handles are original. The mirror above it and the candlesticks, china and chairs all belong to the same period.

In 1823, we find advertisements of "elegant sideboards inlaid with rosewood," "highly polished marble slabs for sideboards from Italy," and "plain and inlaid carved column and claw feet sideboards." The latter description evidently fits Mrs. Fairchild's piece, which thus continued a fashionable model for many years.

Still another variety appears on page 498. This specimen, owned by the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Mass., is of mahogany with semi-circular front. The ever popular bell-flower is carved above the legs, and the lower opening beneath the arch is enclosed with a tambour slide. Knobs are placed upon the drawers and doors, but a brass escutcheon with ring handle still furnishes the tambour slide, which is made of separate strips.

Another handsome sideboard of elaborately carved oak appears as the frontispiece. This belongs to Miss Jessie Colby of New York, and has been in the Colgate family for more than half a century.

A desk and bookcase made of curled maple appears on page 541. This is an old family piece, and is now the property of Mr. Charles S. Fairchild of New York. It is a good specimen of native work and was made about 1812. Another variety of desk faces page 550. This belonged to

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Daniel Webster and is now in the collection of the *Wayside Inn*, Sudbury, Mass, and is owned by Mr. E. R. Lemon. It is of mahogany and satin wood with a narrow inlay of satin wood and ebony at the base, representing a cord. The ring handles are of simple form.



DESK AND CHAIR

Owned by Miss Anne Van Cortlandt, Croton-on-the-Hudson, New York. See below.

A desk of historical interest is shown on this page. De Witt Clinton is said to have died while sitting at it. By it stands a chair somewhat similar to those facing page 118. The pattern of this chair is exactly similar to one owned by the Worshipful Company of Parrish Clerks in London, dating from about 1750. These pieces belong to Miss Anne Van Cortlandt, Croton-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

In addition to the fashionable furniture of the day that was imported from England and France, there were always additional special importations of objects due to individual taste, especially when the revived interest in antiques began to be generally felt. Oriental goods came in in a steady stream. Among our illustrations of individual importations are the carved ebony table facing page 487, that belonged to Houqua, a mandarin of China, and now owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithtown, L. I. (see page 416); a French chair made of fancy wood trimmed with brass and ornamented with blue porcelain plaques, and upholstered in pale blue satin, owned by Mr. Robert Colby, New York; a sofa and chair imported by C. C. Pinckney, and owned by Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charleston, S. C. (see page 493); a carved Indian chair, a table made of South American woods, and a carved ebony mirror from the Summer Palace, Peking, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Small, of Charleston, S. C. (see facing page 498). Bronze candelabra appear facing page 500; and a console table on page 553. The latter was bought in London at a sale of the Russian Ambassador's effects, by John Hubbard of Boston, grandfather of the present owner.

How well New York kept abreast of European fashions in furniture early in the nineteenth century can best be shown by the newspaper announcements. In 1802, Christian, Cabinet-maker, 73 Broad Street, thanks the public for patronage, and says, "the several years of experience he has had as a *workman* in some of the first shops of Europe and America, enable him to supply those who may favour him with their custom, with furniture of the first taste and workmanship."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Two choice articles of furniture come to auction in 1808: "a set of Pillar-and-claw dining-tables in five removes made of uncommonly fine San Domingo mahogany, with brass castors, springs and fasteners complete;" and "a first-rate pedestal and sideboard on castors made of solid mahogany of superior quality." The above articles, the advertisement tells us, "were made in this city to a particular order," and assures us that the mahogany was seasoned five years before being made up.

Among chairs and sofas, we notice :

"A handsome set of drawing room chairs with a suitable sofa and curtains; fancy and Windsor chairs (1802); chairs with rattan bottoms (1806); green Windsor and plain and figured (1808); conversation, curled maple, painted, ornamented, landscape, sewing and rocking chairs (1817); mahogany with hair sittings; rosewood and fancy painted (1819); reclining, cane and rush seat and fancy gilt (1822); bamboo, rocking and sewing; fancy book and round front rush and cane seat; bamboo, round front, rosewood; Grecian back, cane and rush seat, gilt bamboo; hair stuffed, fancy rush and cane seat; imitation rosewood cane seats; elegant mahogany chairs eagle pattern; plain with panelled back; Trafalgar with landscapes (1823); mahogany covered with rich crimson satin damask; square and round front fancy gilt, fancy chairs richly gilt with real gold and bronze; white and gold cane seats (1824); rosewood covered with yellow plush (1825); yellow bamboo (1826); mahogany with plain and figured hair seating (1826). Grecian sofas, and couches of new and elegant patterns (1820); ten Grecian sofas of warranted workmanship (1822); Blair's patent elastic spring sofas (1822); a Grecian sofa with scroll ends, a set superb curled maple chairs with

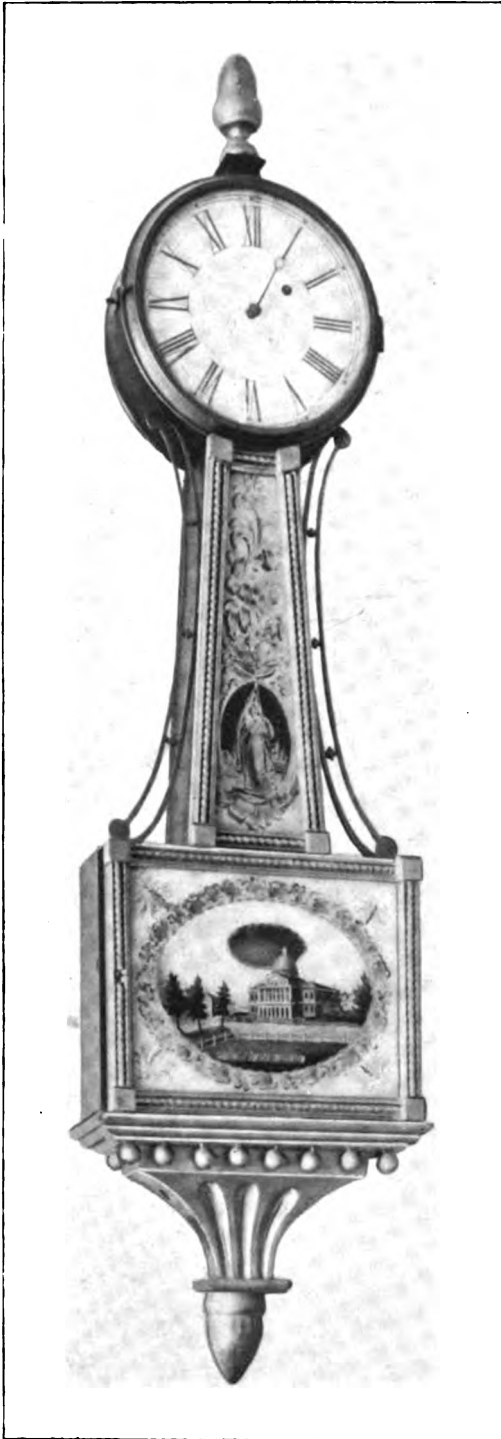
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

cane seats and Grecian posts and settee to match and polished on the varnish; five new pattern couches and sofas (1823); sixty pattern spring and hair seat Grecian sofas (1823); Grecian sofas, some of which are inlaid with rose and satin wood; four plain hair stuffed sofas; three banded-back and scroll-end sofas; a sofa covered with crimson (1823); six scroll-end sofas covered with red damask inlaid with rosewood gilt and bronzed feet; two crimson do., six hair seating, pannel-back and scroll-end sofas; ten elegant black hair seating sofas; two superb settees with elegant damask cushions, pillows, etc., and twelve cane seat white and gold chairs to match (1824); Windsor settees; "rosewood sofa covered with yellow plush and twelve chairs to match, made by order of a Spanish gentleman (1825)." It will be noticed that new fashions are now prevailing, especially the "Fancy" and "Trafalgar" chairs, and the Egyptian and Classic forms of the Empire style. These will all be described in the following chapter. The tables, beds, bureaux, bookcases and other articles of furniture occur in equally multitudinous varieties, but lack of space forbids any attempt at further enumeration.

Two chairs belonging to a full set imported from France, and now in the home of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, appear on page 545. The back of each is carved in a different pattern, the wood being entirely cut away from the figures.

A handsomely carved sofa owned by Dr. Herman V. Mynderse, of Schenectady, N. Y., faces page 510. The scroll ends have the form of dolphins, and the feet terminate in the lion's claw. This is upholstered in horse-hair.

As we have seen how the South impressed a Northern



**"BANJO CLOCK"**

*Owned by Mrs. Wainwright, Hartford, Conn.  
See page 531.*



**CLOCK WITH CHERRY CASE**

*Owned by Mr. Walter Hosmer, Wethersfield, Conn.  
See page 531.*

THE MICHIGAN  
LIBRARY  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN  
1912

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



CURLED MAPLE DESK

Made near Cazenovia about 1812; owned by Mr. Charles S. Fairchild, New York. See page 536.

traveller at this period, it may be interesting to see how the North impressed a Southern visitor. On October 21, 1789, General Washington writes of Connecticut, in his *Diary*: "There is a great equality in the People of this



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

State. Few or no opulent men—and no poor—great similitude in their buildings—the general fashion of which is a Chimney (always of Stone or Brick), and door in the middle, with a staircase fronting the latter, running up by the side of the latter [former?]<sup>2</sup>—two flush stories, with a very good show of sash and glass windows—the size generally is from 30 to 50 feet in length, and from 20 to 30 in width, exclusive of a back shed, which seems to be added as the family increases.”

On October 22, he writes from Brookfield, Mass.: “The fashion of the houses are more diversified than in Connecticut, though many are built in their style.”

On November 3, the note in his *Diary* is as follows: “Portsmouth (N. H.) contains about 5,000 inhabitants. There are some good houses (among which Colonel Langdon’s may be esteemed the first,) but in general they are indifferent, and almost entirely of wood. On wondering at this, as the country is full of stone and good clay for bricks, I was told that on account of the fogs and damp, they deemed them wholesomer, and for that reason preferred wood buildings.”

It will be noticed that Washington was struck with the general uniformity of pecuniary conditions in the North. The luxurious home was, in fact, the exception. Many important people in New England rose into prominence from very modest circumstances. As an example, the Hon. Charles Rich, of Vermont (Member of Congress) began house-keeping in 1791, possessed of no other property than 1 cow, 1 pair 2-year old steers, 6 sheep, 1 bed, and a few articles of household furniture, which, all together, were valued at \$66.00, and about 45 acres of land. While “at the mill,” he wrote, “I constructed a number

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

of articles of furniture, which have been in daily use from that time, to the present." He died in 1824.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, many Bostonians shut up their houses and removed their furniture to places of safety, as was the case in Philadelphia and elsewhere. On August 5, 1775, Abigail Adams writes to John Adams: "If alarming half-a-dozen places at the same time is an act of generalship, Howe may boast of his late conduct. We have never, since the evacuation of Boston, been under apprehensions of an invasion equal to what we suffered last week. All Boston was in confusion, packing up and carting out of town household furniture, military stores, goods, etc. Not less than a thousand teams were employed on Friday and Saturday; and, to their shame be it told, not a small trunk would they carry under eight dollars; and many of them, I am told, asked a hundred dollars a load; for carting a hogshead of molasses eight miles, thirty dollars. O, human nature! or, rather, O, inhuman nature! what art thou? The report of the fleet's being seen off Cape Ann, Friday night, gave me the alarm, and, though pretty weak, I set about packing up my things, and on Saturday moved a load."

Some of the fugitives were fortunate enough to let their houses to British officers before affairs became too serious. One of these was James Lovell, who in 1775 writes to Mr. Oliver Wendell, at Salem, as follows:

"My D<sup>r</sup> Neighbour:

"Just after I wrote you last Doct<sup>r</sup> Morris Physician of the Army an Elderly Gentleman took the House, and was so complaisantly pressing to come in that I work<sup>d</sup> all night from yesterday Noon, and admitted him at 10 this morning. He wishes to have the Furniture committed to his

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Care, nay is willing to pay for it, and makes the strongest Promises of the extremest Care. I think what I have left is better there than carry'd to Jeffries's, my House or the Store. I think *giving* the use a much greater security against Abuse than letting, I therefore told Him that I would leave as p<sup>r</sup> Mem<sup>dum</sup> for the *present*, for which he is greatly thankful, but that I should attend y<sup>r</sup> *Order* respecting all or any Part. As to that 'He shall be very thankful for present use, as it will give opp<sup>o</sup> to provide if y<sup>r</sup> Commands make it necessary.'

"Your Desk and Case shall have the same Care as if the Papers were his own or I may remove it at my pleasure, if free access is too troublesome to me.

"Monday Voulks was out a-Fishing and I entirely forgot Jacob so that my own School Runners performed the whole; and I assure you without breaking 6d. value of any sort. I had the House swept from Garret to Cellar. . . . I have given the Gentleman an Inventory. He promises 10 fold Recompense for Damage, appears mightily pleased with appearances and the Landlord, prays for you to come in upon the present Tenant quitting." He continues: "I have packed every Thing of China Glass in small assorted Packages which are then to be put into lock't Chests in my Cellar. I can give you a specimen: No. 4. *Indian*. 1 Box Cake Pans and illumination molds, both reserved for our coming Day of *American Jubilee*."

It is refreshing to find a patriot so confident of the success of the American arms as to store Bengal lights for the final jubilations.

The British officers naturally took possession of the best quarters they could find, and they were not very careful in their usage of the household goods of the absent

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owners. John Hancock complains of this in a letter to Captain Smith, November 14, 1781:

“Inclosed you have the dimensions of the Bed Chambers for each of which I want Wilton Carpet;—do let them be neat. The British Officers who possessed my



CHAIRS OF FRENCH MAKE

In the home of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass. See page 540.

house totally defaced and removed all my carpet and I must submit.”

The wars of the Revolution were responsible for enormous destruction of furniture, but other causes sometimes operated also.

Chief Justice Sewall, writing from Marblehead, January 27, 1780, says he is literally buried in snow: “You cannot conceive how much we are distressed for wood.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The poorer people go begging continually for every stick they use, and many of the better sort are under a necessity of keeping but one fire; some I know who have burnt chairs, hogsheads, barrels, chests of drawers, etc., etc."

Of course, imported English furniture was scarce in New England while the fighting lasted. On the conclusion of the war, however, we are somewhat surprised to find that English was not excluded in favour of French furniture entirely when the native wares were not considered sufficiently fashionable. We have already seen that the cabinet-makers in the region between Boston and Newburyport made all the furniture in ordinary use there, and that they kept modest stocks. Before 1800, however, we find much longer lists of goods finished and unfinished on hand at the owner's death. One of the richest members of this craft was Samuel Phippen of Salem, who died in 1798, leaving an estate of \$7,888.77. His inventory shows the very varied assortment of wares that were then being produced by the native makers, and, therefore, it is worth reproducing.

No. 1: 48 birch chairs at 80c., a number of chair bows, etc. 25c., \$38.65.

No. 2. 6 mahogany chairs at \$1.10, 24 birch chairs at 80c., \$25.80; 26 bow back chairs, not painted, at 75c., six dining chairs, at 80c., \$24.30; one round birch chair, 80c.; 5 common and 1 trundle bedstead, \$6.00.

No. 3: 36 plain dining chairs, at 80c., \$28.80; one easy chair, \$1.00; one necessary, \$1.00, \$2.00; 2 large birch chairs, at 50c., \$1.00; one pine case with drawers. Shop, three unfinished desks, \$3.00; one birch desk, brassed, \$5.00; 2 unfinished bedsteads, \$1.00; 2 cot frames, \$1.50; maple boards, \$5.00; 20 chairs, cot frames, 4 ordinary bedposts, 11 old chairs and several pieces mahogany, \$3.40.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Front Store: 2 walnut cases with drawers, \$10.00; 2 walnut desks, \$10.00; 1 plain mahogany desk, \$6.00; 4 birch desks, \$16.00; 1 cedar desk, \$7.00; 5 cabin tables, \$7.50; 1 birch table, \$2.00; 1 round table, \$2.00; 2 breakfast tables, \$1.25; 1 chest, \$1.00; 10 birch chairs, \$11.00; 1 round table, \$1.10; 4 fan back chairs, \$4.00; 10 bow backed green chairs, \$8.00; 8 green dining chairs, \$7.20.

Front Chamber: 3 birch desks, \$12.00; 2 birch desks, \$12.00; 4 cedar desks, \$28.00; 1 plain mahogany, \$6.00; 3 mahogany stands, \$2.00; 8 birch stands, \$2.50; 2 mahogany stand tables, \$8.00; 27 birch chairs, \$33.75; 4 trundle bedsteads, \$3.50.

Back Store Chamber: 34 bow back chairs, \$25.50; 1 mahogany stand table, \$4.00.

Back Store: 4 swelled mahogany desks, \$60.00; 1 mahogany table, \$6.00; 2 mahogany card tables, \$10.00; 3 birch tables, \$4.00; 2 birch stand tables, \$4.00; 14 green bow back chairs, \$11.20; 24 bow back chairs, not painted, \$18.00; 20 dining chairs, \$18.00; 1 blue chair, \$.50.

No. 4: 1 bedstead, 3 chests, 1 table, 5 old chairs, \$16.40.

No. 5: 1 cedar post bedstead, \$4.00; 1 case with drawers, \$7.00; 1 bureau, \$4.00; 12 mahogany chairs, at \$1.50, \$18.00; 2 birch card tables, \$2.50; 1 small stand, \$1.00; 1 looking glass, \$3.00.

No. 6: 1 swelled mahogany desk, not completed, \$18.00; 6 birch chairs, at \$1.25, \$7.50; 7 dining chairs, \$6.50; 1 blue chair, \$1.00—\$7.50.

No. 7: 1 mahogany desk and bookcase, \$23.00; 1 black walnut case with drawers, \$1.25; 1 mahogany desk without brasses, \$18.00; 2 tables, \$6.00.

No. 8: 6 birch chairs, \$3.00; 2 bedsteads, sacking bottoms, \$5.00; 1 cot, sacking bottom, \$1.00.

No. 9: 1 desk and bookcase, \$15.00; 1 mahogany side table, \$1.75; 2 tea trays, \$1.00; 1 waiter, \$.15; 4 arm and 3 dining chairs, \$2.45.

No. 10: 1 clock, \$3.00; 1 maple case with drawers, \$1.50—\$4.50; 1 small stand, a table and tea-board, \$1.75; 1 pine table,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

folding, boards, etc.; horse to dry clothes, 1 looking glass, 40c.—  
\$2.40.

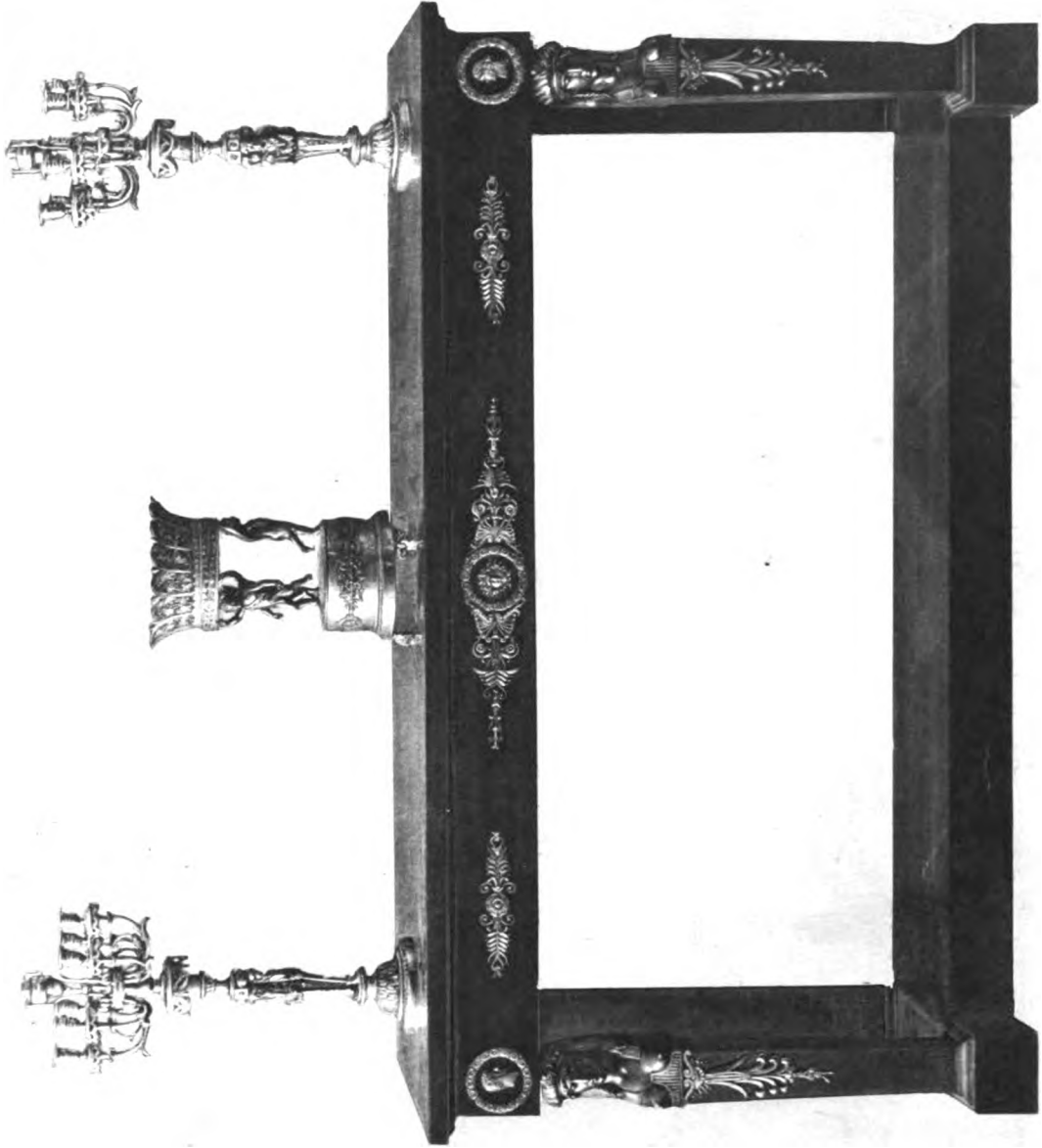
No. 11: Chair bows, etc., \$24.75.

The merchant marine of Salem vastly increased after the Revolution. In 1786, the *Grand Turk* was the first New England ship to double the Cape for Canton, and in 1790 the *Astrea* was the first to bring home a cargo of tea in an American bottom. In 1805, Salem had forty-eight vessels that rounded the Cape. After the war of 1812, forty-two Indiamen had sailed, and sixteen returned by 1816. In 1817, there were fifty-three; and in 1821, fifty-eight ships of that port in the India trade. There were, therefore, many wealthy Salem merchants.

One of the richest at the beginning of the nineteenth century was Mr. Elias H. Derby, who left an estate of about \$200,000 in 1805. His possessions will give an idea of a luxurious home of that period.

Gaining admission by the Lower Entry, the visitor found himself in a commodious hall furnished with a dining and a breakfast table, nine chairs covered with hair-cloth and a child's chair. Two strips of carpeting, and a "door-carpet" were on the floor, and six pictures on the walls. In a small closet were some cutlery, china and glass. This was lighted by a large entry lamp, worth thirty-five dollars, and communicated with four rooms.

The principal objects in the Oval room were fifteen chairs, two large dining tables, a floor-cloth and a pair of girandoles. Another room contained a mahogany table with spare leaves, another small mahogany table, an arm-chair covered with horsehair, other chairs and a pair of large looking-glasses. Six gilded cornices with cords, gave



CONSOLE TABLE

*Originally owned by Joseph Bonaparte at Point Breese, N. J. now by Mr. Oliver Hopkinson, Philadelphia, Pa. See pages 566-7.*

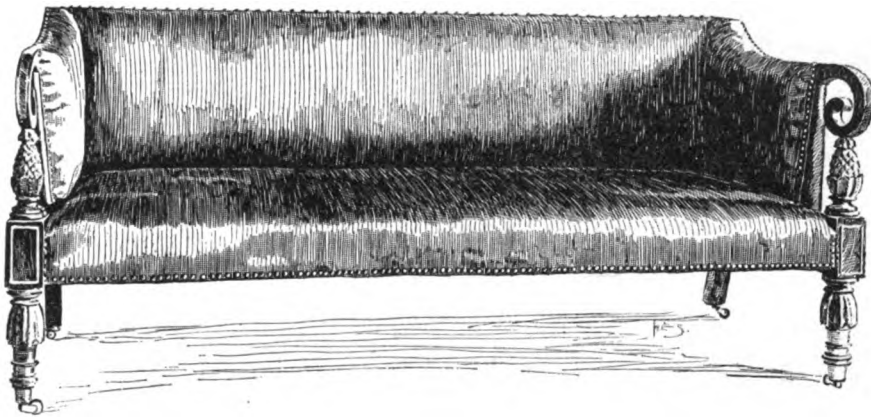


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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

a finish to the window curtains. A brass fender was in front of the fire. Among the ornaments were four Chinese and three British images; and the other articles listed are two knife-cases, a complete set of Paris china (valued at \$230.00) and a plate-warmer, a painted and a tin cooler, and a camera obscura.

The Southeast Parlour was furnished with a large mahogany, a Pembroke and a card-table; a sideboard, gar-



MAHOGANY SOFA

Owned by the Rev. Ezra Ripley (1777-1841), afterwards by Nathaniel Hawthorne; now in the rooms of the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass. See page 553.

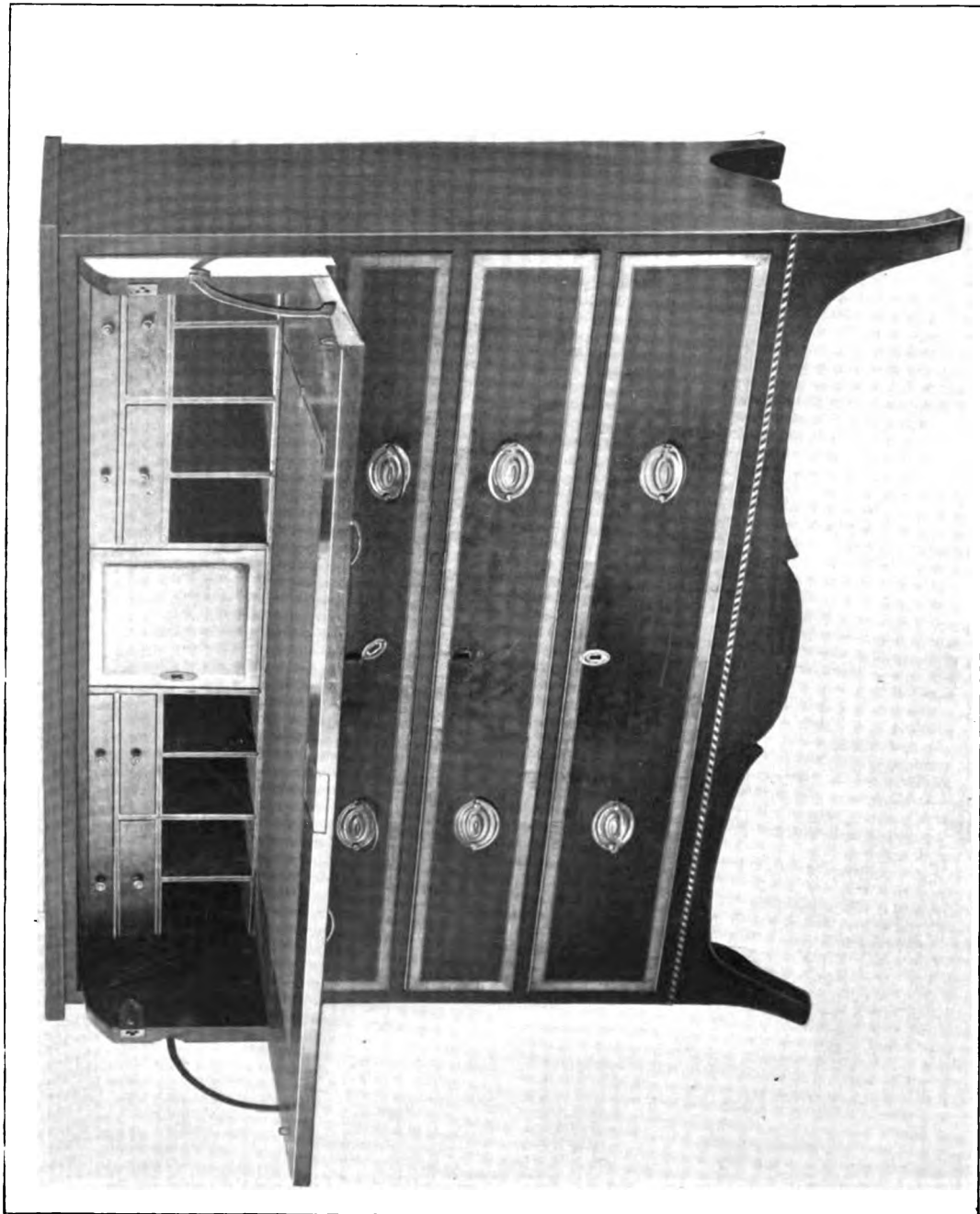
nished with two knife-cases containing eight silver spoons, two carving knives and forks and eight dozen other knives and forks. The floor was covered with a Brussels carpet and a "Door Carpet." The fireplace was supplied with brass andirons, shovel and tongs, and a hearth-brush and pair of bellows. There were eight mahogany chairs worth two dollars each, two "lolling" and two Windsor chairs with arms. Two crickets, five tea-waiters and one mahogany stand were also in this room. At the windows were five curtains and cornices. A closet contained china worth \$371.00.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The Northwest Parlour contained two card-tables and one stand-table, a settee with horsehair covering, eight chairs and two armchairs, a looking-glass and two crickets. The hearth was garnished with an iron back, brass andirons, a shovel and pair of tongs, and a brush and pair of bellows. The windows were adorned with four curtains and cornices; and the walls with a picture of Mayor Pearson, one called *The Woodman*, and two on copper. A Brussels carpet was on the floor.

Going up the carpeted stairs, the middle North, the Northeast, Northwest and Southwest chambers were reached. The former was used as a store-room, containing two bed-chairs, a bed-carpet, two boxes of glass, one of door-locks, and "Entry-Wilton carpet," a case of bottles, a box of composition ornaments, a leather portmanteau, a small tea-chest and caddy. The Southwest Chamber contained a four-post bedstead with bedding and furnishings, nine chairs, a chest of drawers, a table, and a looking-glass. The hearth was supplied with shovel, tongs, andirons and a pair of bellows; and the floor with a Scotch carpet.

The Northwest Chamber had a mahogany commode, a washhand-stand and basin, a dressing-glass, a looking-glass, mahogany chairs and one easy-chair. Five pictures were on the walls, and three white china flower-pots were additional ornaments. The windows were shaded by four white cotton curtains; and on the hearth were brass andirons, shovel, tongs and hearth-brush. The floor was covered with a Brussels carpet. The most valuable object in the room was the handsome mahogany four-post bedstead (\$130.00), with curtains and bedding. Two rose blankets, one flannel blanket, a damask tablecloth and eighteen napkins were kept in this room.



**DANIEL WEBSTER'S DESK**

*Now in the collection of the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Mass.; owned by Mr. E. R. Lemon. See pages 536-7.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The furniture of the Northeast Chamber comprised a four-post mahogany bedstead with its furnishings, a bureau, a chest of drawers, a washhand-stand, a trunk, six chamber and two rocking-chairs. Besides a kidderminster, there was also a bedside carpet. The fireplace had an iron back, a fine brass fender, and steel shovel and tongs.

The Southeast Chamber contained a fine four-post bedstead with green curtains and bedding (\$133.00), two green chairs, and eight mahogany chairs with silk bottoms, a valuable easy-chair and covering, a bureau, a chest-upon-chest of drawers, a stand-table and an expensive looking-glass. Other objects that added to the comfort and elegance of this apartment were a Brussels carpet, two crickets, two flower-pots, brass andirons, bellows and steel shovel, tongs and fender. Closets to this chamber contained an oval looking-glass, two trunks containing flannel and rose blankets, a bedstead and bedding, a glass lamp, two bottle-stands, sixteen labels for decanters, and silver plate to the value of \$1,195.54.

In the Southwest Upper Chamber was a curtained bed with bedding.

The Northeast Upper Chamber contained two bedsteads and bedding of moderate value, two small carpets, a looking-glass, a desk and bookcase, a table, a washhand-stand and six chairs covered with haircloth.

The Northwest Upper Chamber had its floor covered with a Wilton carpet and two strips of the same. Eight pictures hung on the walls, and brass andirons were on the hearth. The other movables comprised a looking-glass, a dressing-glass, a washhand-stand basin and bottle, a bureau, six chairs with covers and one curtained mahogany bedstead and bedding.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The Middle South Chamber contained a round tea-table, a chamber table and drawers, a basket, a dressing-glass, a looking-glass, four chairs covered with hair-cloth, a bedstead with bedding and a bedside carpet.

The Southwest Upper Chamber had six green Windsor chairs, two semicircular tables, bedding and coverings, two mahogany bookcases containing about 770 volumes, four trunks, eight pictures, two globes, and steel tongs and shovel.

In the Lantern and Garret were various articles, including a telescope, spinning-wheel, trunk, box of marble, two picture-frames, a table, set of china, three Venetian window blinds, and two mahogany bird-cages.

Over the Lower Entry was the Chamber Entry. This was furnished with six chamber chairs, two armchairs, and an eight-day clock. Two "Door-carpets" and thirty-one yards of "entry and stair-carpeting" covered floor and stairs. The walls were adorned with twelve pictures. A trunk and a Sedan-chair were also kept here. A closet also contained some plated ware.

In the Upper Entry was a trunk containing a lot of household stuff, including eight counterpanes, a suit of six damask window curtains (valued at \$200.00), ditto purple and white, ditto blue and white, two red and white sofa coverings, eight yellow chair-bottom covers, six patch ditto, eight white Marseilles ditto. Two bundles of bed-trimmings, one suit of harrateen bed curtains, twenty-four yards of stair carpet for the upper story, and one old Wilton carpet completed the list.

The Eastern Entry was used as a kind of study; it contained a desk and bookcase with ninety-nine miscellaneous volumes and a Bible, two chairs, a wire fire-fender, and an "entry carpet."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The kitchen was furnished, among other objects, with six Windsor chairs, two folding-tables, and a mahogany case. There were two cellars well stored, one being stocked with Cape, Constantia, Madeira and Catalonia wine.



CONSOLE TABLE

Owned by Mr. Robert A. Boit, Boston, Mass. See page 538.

It will be noticed that Mr. Derby owned a “settee with horsehair covering,” and that many of his chairs were also upholstered in this material. A sofa or a settee of a kind that might have been among his furniture appears on page 549. The frame is of mahogany, and the scroll arms rest upon carved pineapples. The covering is black horsehair. This sofa belonged to the Rev. Ezra Ripley (1777–1841) and was afterwards owned by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is now in the rooms of the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass.



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The wealth and luxury of the citizens of Salem became the talk of the world, in 1817, by the cruise of *Cleopatra's Barge*, which is said to have been the first private yacht ever owned by an American, and which in luxurious appointments remained unsurpassed till a comparatively recent date. This boat was of 200 tons burden, and was built and commanded by Captain George Crowninshield, who in partnership with his brothers had amassed a large fortune during the war of 1812 by the successful cruise of their privateer, the *America*. He sailed from Salem in March, 1817, intending to go round the world. After touching at Fayal, he visited the chief Spanish and Italian ports, attracting a great deal of attention, and entertaining and being entertained by many European notabilities. His sole travelling companion, to whom he was greatly attached, fell ill at Malta; he therefore immediately sailed for home, and arrived at Salem in November. There his friend succumbed, and Captain George died of the shock fifteen minutes later.

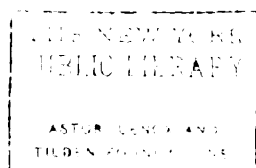
The fame of *Cleopatra's Barge* filled all the newspapers of the day; and everybody was talking of her unparalleled richness and elegance. The *Salem Gazette* of January 14, 1817, contains a notice of the yacht, from which the following is taken :

“ You descend into a magnificent saloon about 20 feet long and 19 broad, finished on all sides with polished mahogany, inlaid with other ornamental wood. The settees of the saloon are of splendid workmanship; the backs are shaped like the ancient lyre, and the seats are covered with crimson silk-velvet, bordered with a very wide edging of gold lace. Two splendid mirrors, standing at either end, and a magnificent chandelier, suspended in the centre of



**CABINET**

*Carved by Mr. John Lord Hayes; owned by Miss Hayes, Cambridge, Mass. See page 556.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

the saloon, give a richness of effect to it, not easily surpassed."

Other accounts supply the following additional details:

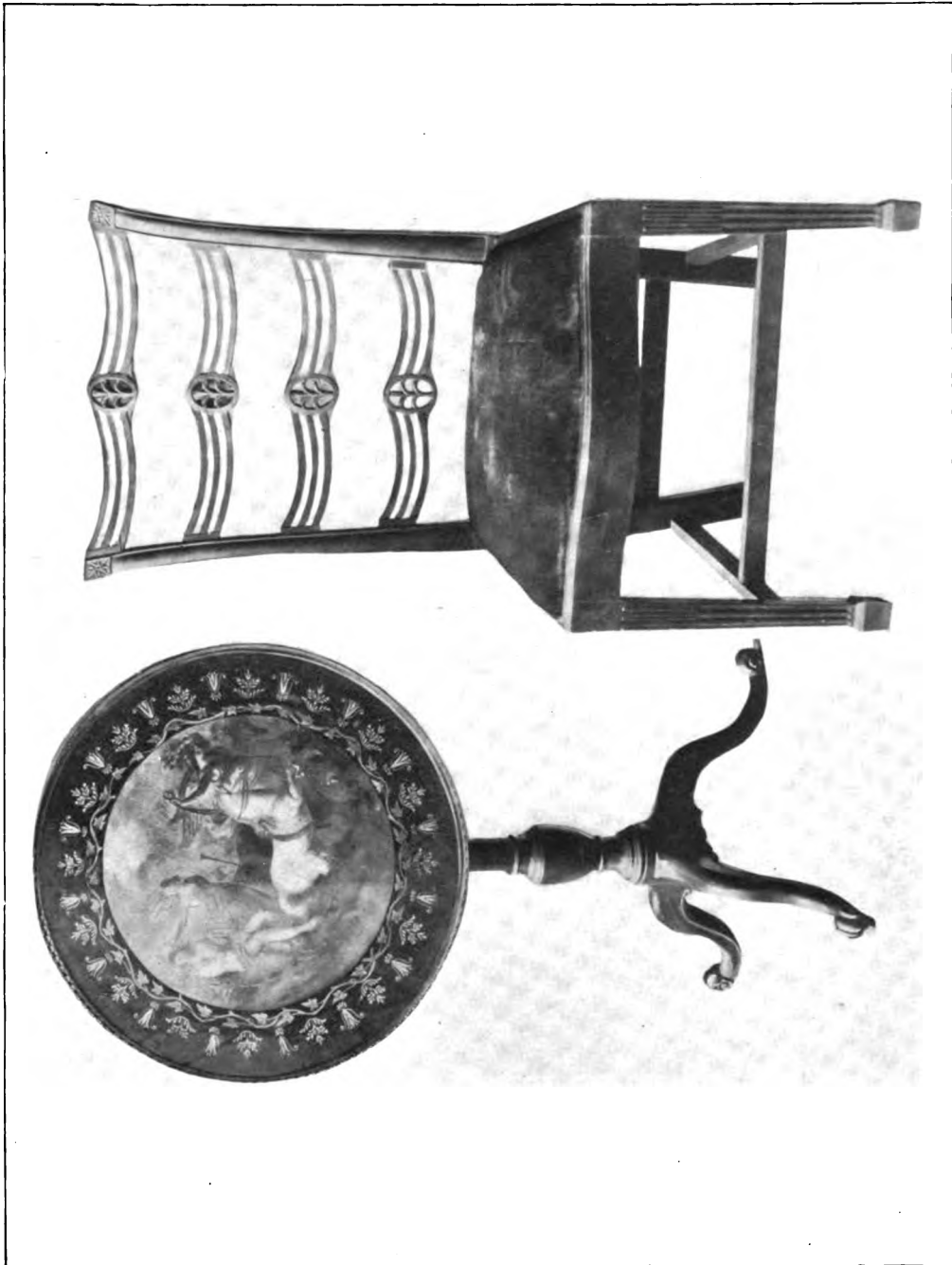
"The chandelier cost \$150.00. The sofas in the cabin were of mahogany and bird's-eye maple, and measured eleven feet in length. The lyres forming the back were strung with thick brass wire. The cost of these sofas amounted to \$400.00. The beams of the ceiling in the saloon were edged with gold beading; for the greater safety of the passengers when the yacht rolled, two ropes were strung along the walls: these were covered with red silk velvet twisted with gold cord. A luxurious Brussels carpet was on the floor: the colours were orange and brown mixed with green.

"On either side of the gilt-framed mirrors was a lamp and a gilded eagle. In the walls, columns with gilded capitals alternated with cupboards, through the glass doors of which gleamed costly china. Captain George took great pains in arranging this to the best advantage; and also took great pride in his table-linen, glass, and rich silver plate. The latter included a splendid tea-urn, from twelve to fifteen inches in height, with a lamp underneath; and a thick sugar-bowl and cream-jug to match. The bedroom was also luxuriously appointed; the bed had rich variegated yellow hangings, full curtains and handsome fringe." Among the furniture of this yacht were three chairs, now owned by Mrs. Edward C. Pickering, of the Observatory, Cambridge, Mass., having descended to her through the Crowninshield family. One of these appears on page 557, it is of the variety known as the "Fancy Chair," with painted back, rush-bottom and gilded ball ornaments.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

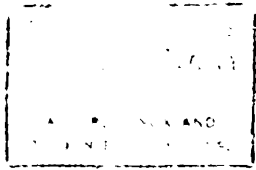
We have seen that cabinet-making was sometimes the occupation of amateurs, and we have drawn a little attention to carvers that came here from abroad. A very fine example of amateur modern carving faces page 554. This is the work of Mr. John Lord Hayes, L.L. D., of Cambridge, Mass., whose house is filled with other productions of his that are equally remarkable, including mantel-pieces, chairs, frames for mirrors, etc. Mr. Hayes merely carved for pastime and slightly alluded to it as his "knitting-work." These articles are now owned by his sons and daughters, in Cambridge, Mass.

We have already seen that Philadelphia had many opulent citizens whose houses were furnished in accordance with the dictates of Fashion long before the Revolution. Du Simitière gives a list of eighty-four families that kept equipages in 1772. There was quite a local aristocracy in which the Shippens, Willings and Binghamms were prominent. When the city was occupied by the British, many of the citizens departed with their effects, while others stayed behind and entered into the gaieties of the British and German officers. The most famous festival of the period was an entertainment given in 1778 by his officers to Lord Howe on his retiring from command. This has left somewhat sombre memories by the fact that one of the principal invited belles, Miss Margaret Shippen, afterwards married Benedict Arnold; and that Major André had charge of the decorations and ornaments. This Tory pageant and ball was a strange medley called *The Mischianza*, and took place at the Wharton House. There were Ladies of the Blended Rose and Ladies of the Burning Mountain, all with attendant Knights. André wrote a description of it for the *Gentlemen's Magazine* (1778). A short account of



**CHAIR AND TABLE**

*Owned by Stephen Girard; now in Girard College, Philadelphia, Pa. See page 564.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

this entertainment may be quoted from a contemporary description, as it will serve as a picture of gala decorations during the Revolution.



“FANCY” CHAIR, FROM “CLEOPATRA’S BARGE”

Now owned by Mrs. Edward C. Pickering, Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. See page 555.

“Upon the opening of two folding doors, we entered a large Hall, in length about thirty, in breadth twenty feet, elegantly illuminated with spermaceti. The floor was covered with green baize. On each side of the Hall were long tables with benches, covered also with green baize. Each of these tables was set off with a service of elegant china, and tea, coffee, and various kinds of cakes. The ceilings and sides of the Hall were adorned with paintings,

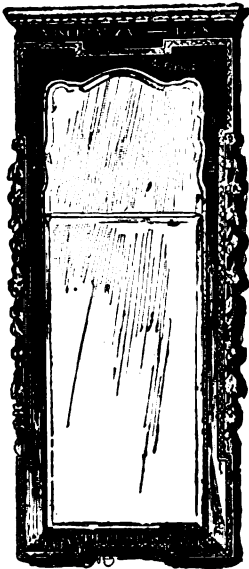


## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

and on each side were two large rooms ornamented in like manner. Over each chimney was painted a large cornucopia full of flowers; and over each door an empty cornucopia inverted. As soon as tea and coffee were over, the knights, dulcineas, and most of the company went up stairs into a large entry elegantly painted, in which hung many mirrors, whose frames were covered with silk entwined and decorated with bows, roses, etc. Between each of these mirrors were three spermaceti candles in sconces, adorned with gauze, silk, etc. The rooms on each side of the entry were ornamented in the same manner. Over the staircase was an orchestra, in which was a band of music. When the company was come up, the dulcineas danced first with the knights, and then with the squires; and after them the rest of the company danced. In several of the rooms were tables with punch, sangaree, wine, cakes, etc. At half after ten o'clock, the windows were thrown open, and an elegant firework was exhibited. Towards the conclusion the triumphal arch, next to the house, appeared magnificently illuminated, and Fame blew from her trumpet in letters of light, these words: "*Tes Lauriers sont immortels.*"

"After the firework the company returned, some to dancing, and others to a faro bank, which was opened by three German officers in one of the parlours. The company continued dancing and playing till twelve o'clock, when we were called to supper, and two folding doors at the end of the Hall being thrown open, we entered a room 200 feet long. The floor was covered with painted canvas; the roof and sides hung with paintings and ornamented with fifty large mirrors. From the roof hung twelve lustres, with twenty spermaceti candles in each. In this room

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



MAHOGANY AND GILT  
MIRROR

Used at the fête of the *Mischianza*, 1778; now owned by the Philadelphia Library Company.

two tables reached from one end to the other. On each side were recesses with sideboards in which were all kinds of liquors. On the two tables were fifty large elegant pyramids, with jellies, syllabubs, cakes and sweetmeats. The supper was entirely cold, except several tureens of soup; and consisted of chickens, lamb, buttered ham, Yorkshire pies, veal, variously prepared, puddings, etc. Twenty-four negro men attended the tables in white shirts with blue silk sashes, silk turbans, tin collars and bracelets. The company that sat down to supper were four hundred."

The mirror shown on this page was one of those mentioned above. It is of mahogany with ornaments carved and gilt. The illustration gives no idea of its size, which is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by 3 feet.

One of the finest homes in Philadelphia was that of Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution. The Prince de Broglie's narrative (1782) says: "M. de la Luzerne conducted me to the house of Mrs. Morris to take tea. She is the wife of the Financier of the United States. The house is simple, but neat and proper. The doors and tables are of superb mahogany, and polished. The locks and trimmings are of brass, charmingly bright. The porcelain cups were arranged with great precision. The mistress of the house had an agreeable expression, and was dressed entirely in white. I got some excellent tea, and I think that I should still be drinking it, if the ambassador

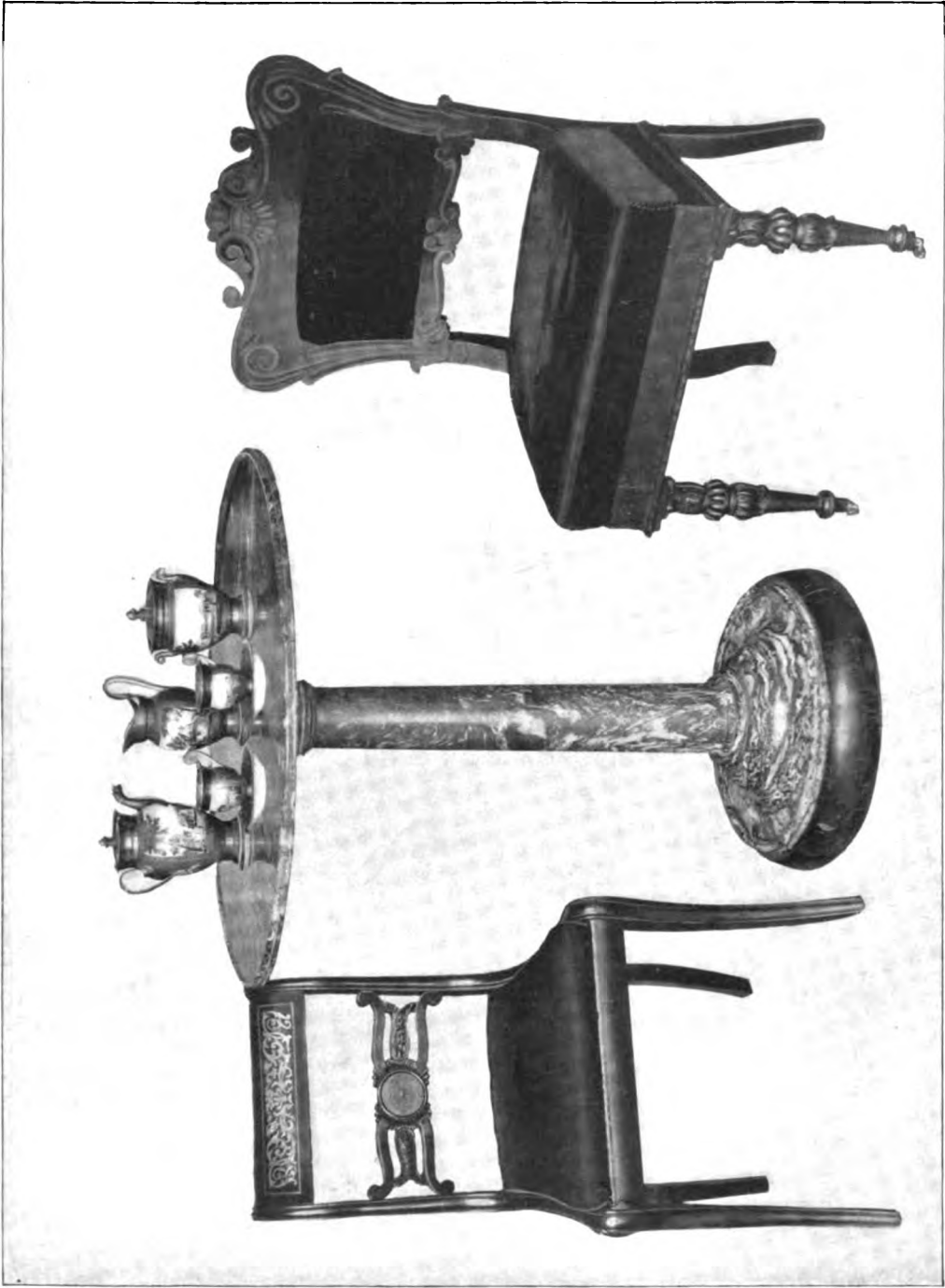
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

had not charitably warned me, when I had taken the twelfth cup, that I must put my spoon across my cup whenever I wanted this species of torture by hot water to stop, since, said he to me, 'It is almost as bad manners to refuse a cup of tea when it is offered to you, as it would be indiscreet for the mistress of the house to offer you more when the ceremony of the spoon has shown what your wishes are in this matter.' "

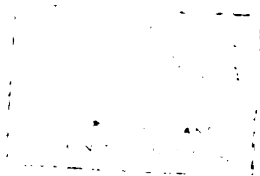
The Marquis de Chastellux also says that his house is "handsome, resembling perfectly the houses of London. He lives there without ostentation, but not without expense; for he spares nothing which can contribute to his happiness and that of Mrs. Morris, to whom he is much attached." The translator adds: "The house the Marquis speaks of, in which Mr. Morris lives, belonged formerly to Mr. Richard Penn. The Financier has made great additions to it, and is the first who has introduced the luxury of hot-houses and ice-houses on the continent. He has likewise purchased the elegant country-house formerly occupied by the traitor Arnold; nor is his luxury to be outdone by any commercial voluptuary of London."

Mr. Lowell, of Boston, and H. G. Otis visited Morris in 1783. Otis records in his description that they "dined with thirty persons in a style of voluptuous magnificence which I have never seen equalled."

Manasseh Cutler mentions Morris's country-seat, *The Hills*, on the Schuylkill, in 1787. It was unfinished then, although Morris bought it in 1770. Later it was named *Lemon Hill*. During the Revolution, he lived on Front Street; and, in 1785, bought some property on High Street with the ruins of the Penn house, which he rebuilt. This was considered the handsomest house in Philadelphia. It

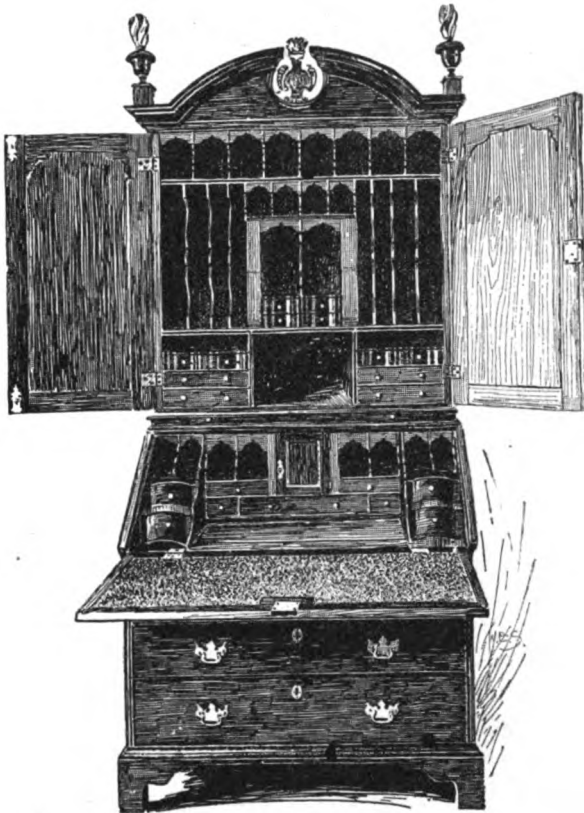


MARBLE TABLE AND CHAIRS OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY  
*Given by Caroline Bonaparte to Judge Joseph Hopkinson; now owned by Mr. Oliver Hopkinson, Philadelphia, Pa. See page 567.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

was of brick and three stories high. When the Government removed to Philadelphia, he gave up the house. The city made it the official residence, and here Washington lived. (See page 512.) In 1791, Morris lived on the



SECRETARY

Owned by Judge Joel Jones of Philadelphia, now by his son, the Rev. John Sparhawk Jones, Philadelphia. See page 567.

corner of Sixth and Market Streets. In 1795, he bought a square bounded by Chestnut, Walnut, Seventh and Eighth Streets for £10,000, and charged Major L'Enfant to build him a mansion. This was begun in 1795, and continued to 1800. It was never finished. This was known as

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“Morris’s Folly,” and was built of brick with window and door ornamentations of pale blue stone. Morris’s luxury excited much criticism; in 1796, Callender wrote: “A person is just now building, at an enormous expense, a palace in Philadelphia. His bills have long been in the market at eighteen pence or a shilling per pound. This is the condition of our laws for the recovery of millions. At the same time the prison at Philadelphia is crowded with tenants, many of whom are indebted only in petty sums.”

Morris died in 1806. Facing page 458 and page 472 are shown two specimens of furniture that belonged to him, and it will be noticed that these are of styles that had not long been in fashion.

Another very wealthy Philadelphian was William Bingham, who was senator from Pennsylvania. Mrs. Bingham was famous for her beauty, her influence and the elegance of her home. About 1784, Mr. and Mrs. Bingham went to Europe. She was presented at the Court of Louis XVI, went to The Hague, and attracted attention at the Court of George III. They remained five years in Europe, and studied the dwellings in London and Paris to find a model for their Philadelphia home. They chose the house of the Duke of Manchester. Their home, on Third Street, above Spruce, was considered superb. Open ironwork gates guarded the carriage-way and the garden of three acres was enclosed behind a low wall. The hall was noted for its broad marble stairway. Much of the furniture, including the carpets, was made in France.

Wanzey gives the following description in 1794:

“I dined this day with Mr. Bingham, to whom I had a letter of introduction. I found a magnificent house and

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

gardens in the best English taste, with elegant and even superb furniture. The chairs of the drawing-room were from Seddon's in London, of the newest taste; the back in the form of a lyre, with festoons of crimson and yellow silk.



MAHOGANY CHAIR

From the Library of Napoleon I., at Malmaison; given by Louis Philippe to the Marquis de Margny, New Orleans, La. See page 567-8.

The curtains of the room a festoon of the same. The carpet one of Moore's most expensive patterns.

“The room was papered in the French taste, after the style of the Vatican at Rome. In the garden was a profusion of lemon, orange and citron trees; and many aloes and other exotics.”



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Mr. Bingham's ways did not accord with the ideas of Republican simplicity that were in favour with so many of his countrymen. To some of his guests, the ceremony observed at his receptions was even more objectionable than his display of wealth. Breck complains:

“The forms at his house were not suited to our manners. I was often at his parties, at which each guest was announced; first, at the entrance-door his name was called aloud, and taken up by a servant on the stairs, who passed it on to the man-in-waiting at the drawing-room door. In this drawing-room the furniture was superb Gobelin, and the folding-doors were covered with mirrors, which reflected the figures of the company, so as to deceive an untravelled countryman, who, having been paraded up the marble stairway amid the echoes of his name—oftimes made very ridiculous by the manner in which the servants pronounced it—would enter the brilliant apartment and salute the looking-glasses instead of the master and mistress of the house and their guests.”

Philadelphia was especially happy in having citizens who could help the government financially in critical times. Examples of the furniture of Stephen Girard, who rendered such valuable services during the war of 1812, have already been given on page 454 and page 529. Two other specimens of his possessions face page 556. The table top is painted with brilliant colours; the chair is mahogany, of about 1780.

Joseph Bonaparte settled in Philadelphia about 1815, and after having lived in the city and at *Lansdowne*, the home of the Bingham, he bought eighteen hundred acres on the Delaware River, near Bordentown, N. J. Here he built a magnificent house, known as *Point Breeze*, where he

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

dwelt for fourteen years. The house was brick covered with white plaster, and had a long sloping roof with high dormer windows and broad doorways flanked by wooden columns. The interior was beautifully adorned with delicately sculptured marble mantel-pieces, rich tapestries, rare



EMPIRE CHAIR

Owned by President Munroe ; now by Miss Elizabeth Byrd Nicholas, Washington, D. C. See page 568.

furniture and valuable paintings, some of which had been given to Joseph by Cardinal Fesch. The grounds were laid out by landscape gardeners brought from Europe.

We can gain a glimpse of this handsome estate and of its host from Levasseur's *Lafayette in America* :

“Gen. Lafayette went in a carriage with the governor and one of his aids without escort or parade to Borden-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

town, the residence of Joseph Bonaparte. The Ex-King appeared much affected by the visit of the nation's guest. He detained us to dinner, and introduced us to his family. Before dinner was served, Joseph withdrew in company with Lafayette to his cabinet, and remained there for more than an hour. After dinner, of which Madame de Musignano did the honours with much amiableness, we found the gardens and yards crowded with the inhabitants of the vicinity, who brought their children to receive the benediction of the patriarch of liberty. Joseph himself with eagerness ordered the doors to be thrown open, and in an instant the apartments were filled by the enthusiastic multitude. It was a truly striking picture to behold these good American villagers under the rich ceilings of such a mansion. Although their eyes were unaccustomed to all the splendours of a regal establishment, they stopped not to dwell upon the beautiful productions of the French and Italian schools, nor upon the bronzes and exquisite statuary of which these apartments are adorned with elegant profusion; it was Lafayette alone that they wished to see, and after having seen him, they retired satisfied and as if incapable of noticing anything else.

“Time flew rapidly during this visit, and the Governor of New Jersey was obliged to remind the general that we had only time enough to reach Trenton before night. We immediately set out. Joseph and his family wished to accompany the General a part of the way; we divided the carriages which were prepared for us and slowly traversed the large and beautiful property, the peaceful possession of which appeared to me far preferable to that of the troubled Kingdom of Spain.”

The handsome Empire console table facing page 548

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

is one of a pair that were in Joseph Bonaparte's house that we have just described. These tables were purchased by Judge Joseph Hopkinson of Philadelphia, son of Francis Hopkinson, the Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Judge Hopkinson was for many years a confidential friend of Bonaparte's and managed his estates for him whenever he was absent from America. He presented Judge Hopkinson with a valuable painting of still life by Snyders that hangs over this table. The candelabra on the table belonged also to Bonaparte. These relics are now the property of Mr. Oliver Hopkinson of Philadelphia, who also owns the articles that face page 560. The gray marble table was a present from Caroline Bonaparte to Judge Joseph Hopkinson, and the superb set of plum-coloured and gold Sèvres standing upon it belonged to Joseph Bonaparte. The chair to the left of the table is of the form known as "the Trafalgar." The back is beautifully inlaid with brass. The chair on the right is of a style belonging to about 1825. Another piece of furniture associated with Joseph Bonaparte appears on page 529.

The handsome mahogany secretary on page 561, is a Philadelphia piece adorned with brass escutcheons and the figure of an eagle and burning torches of brass. This belonged to Judge Joel Jones of Philadelphia, and is now owned by his son, the Rev. John Sparhawk Jones of that city.

An example of a heavy and unattractive chair appears on page 563. It came from the library of Napoleon I. at *Malmaison* and was given by Louis Philippe to the Marquis de Marigny of New Orleans. It will be observed that the old jar-shaped splat, but very ugly in form, reappears beneath the slightly curved and cumbrous top-rail. This

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

model, which is of mahogany, survived many years, and similar examples, therefore, exist in large numbers.

A better style occurs on page 565. This was one of a set consisting of two sofas, twelve chairs, and two ottomans. These were brought to this country by President Monroe from Paris. The wood was hard yellow picked out with gold, and the female figure and the scrollwork were bronze. The covering was sky blue satin with yellow cording around the cushions. This chair, now belonging to Miss Elizabeth Byrd Nicholas of Washington, D. C., was purchased by Judge Philip Norbonne Nicholas of Richmond, Va., from Mr. Monroe in Virginia after Mr. Monroe's return from Paris, where he used the set. The characteristics of Empire furniture will be described in the next chapter.



ATURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

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THE  
FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS



PART VIII  
WOODS, UPHOLSTERY AND STYLES  
OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS : : NEW YORK





**THE FURNITURE OF  
OUR FOREFATHERS**

**Part VIII**



ASTOR, LENOX AND  
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OF OUR   
FOREFATHERS



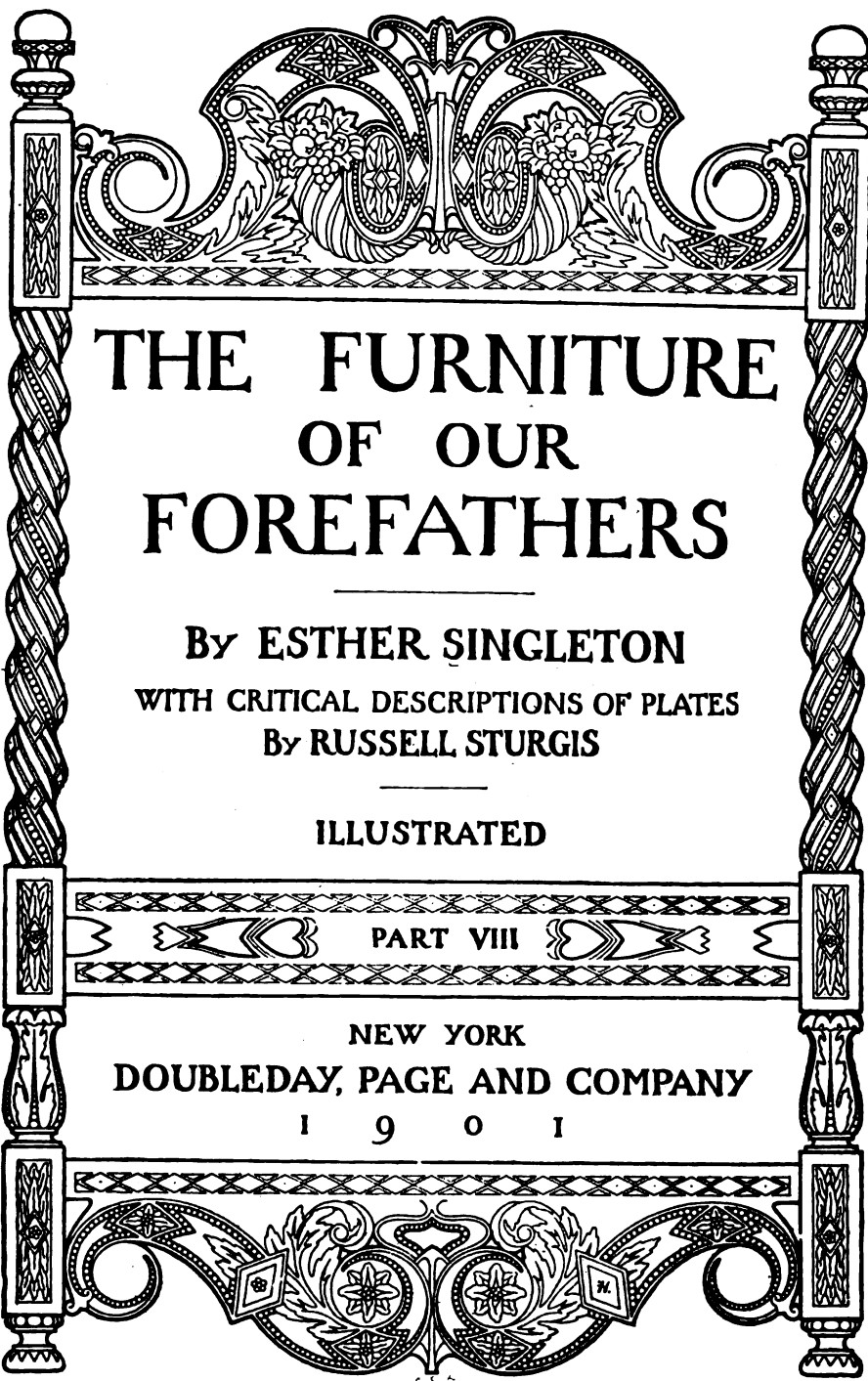


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THE FURNITURE  
OF OUR  
FOREFATHERS

By ESTHER SINGLETON  
WITH CRITICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PLATES  
By RUSSELL STURGIS

ILLUSTRATED

PART VIII

NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND COMPANY

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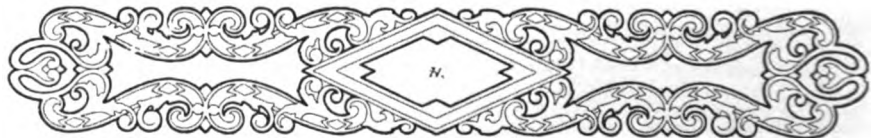


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WITH CRITICAL NOTES ON MANY OF  
THE PLATES BY RUSSELL STURGIS



ALL THE NOTES FURNISHED BY MR. STURGIS  
ARE FOLLOWED BY HIS SIGNATURE.

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FRONTISPIECE SETTEE . . . . . FACING iii

The settee, or double armchair, was a favourite design of the Chippendale school. The one represented here is of mahogany,—bold, massive and handsome. It is the product of some English cabinet-maker who worked in the Chippendale school. The settee rests on six cabriole legs and the front three end in volutes instead of the ball-and-claw, as do those facing pages 434 and 438. The arms are carved and are raised to a comfortable height. The side rails are curved, as is also the top, which is ornamented with rosettes and leaves. The two splats are reminiscent of a somewhat bulky Chinese jar, but are lightened by a scrolling band gracefully twisted, and are decorated further with a cord and rosettes. The seat is stuffed and covered with beautiful printed velvet fastened with a row of brass nails, below which runs a delicate band of ornate carving in the form of flowers and leaves terminating in rosettes. E. S.

PORCELAIN CABINET . . . . . FACING 571

Shallow cabinet adorned with relatively large plaques of painted porcelain with the mountings and frames of the panels and the large colonnettes which form the uprights probably in porcelain also, for such accessories were often made in the eighteenth century by firing and painting small cylinders and rings adorned with relief ornaments and then mounting them upon a stout iron rod like beads upon a string so that the appearance of a column of solid porcelain was not badly rendered. This piece in dark wood and with all its fittings and mountings of painted ceramic ware of fine quality is of necessity a most effective and brilliant piece. The painted decoration seems to be monochromatic. R. Sturgis.

EMPIRE SOFA . . . . . 573

This sofa, upholstered in a brocade of varied colours, is of fine proportions. The mounts ornamenting it are particularly handsome, notably the dolphin which follows gracefully the outline of the scrolled ends. In one of Sheraton's plates in his *Cabinet Dictionary* (London, 1803) he makes use of the dolphin in almost this identical manner. The dolphin is of very frequent occurrence during the Louis Seize period. It was regarded by the ancients as the king of fishes and is the symbol of maritime supremacy. The dolphin is used in exactly the same way on a sofa facing page 510, but here it is boldly carved. Dolphins also occur on the mirror facing page 500. E. S.

LOUIS XVI. VITRINE . . . . . FACING 575

Bookcase in which the free use of gilded metal used in contrast with smooth and polished dark wood is the only motive of adornment. Beyond that the severe simplicity of the parts is what makes the piece attractive. Nor is such a combination of rather brilliant colour with a simple general design at all inadequate for the purpose. The piece is of the refined and constrained character of design which came to America direct from France in the days of the active sympathy taken by the French in our English colonies. R. Sturgis.

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| LADY'S ESCRITTOIRE . . . . .  | FACING 576 |
| Cabinet standing upon a table. A very small piece of extreme delicacy and refinement of design, the whole of dark wood inlaid minutely with metal and fitted with metal mountings of probably gilt bronze. The piece is of that transition period at the beginning of the <i>Style Louis Seize</i> , when the artists were still a little afraid of the severe straight lines which later were altogether approved and uniformly adopted. Here are the table legs of double curvature characteristic of the <i>Style Louis Quinze</i> , but the delicacy of the parts is of the new reign, and the frank adoption of the surface adornment in delicate spots of metal on the dark ground is the beginning of that wonderful system of marquetry which was to make the last work of the old dispensation in France so effective. R. Sturgis. |            |
| LOUIS XVI. WRITING-DESK . . . . .   | 577        |
| Writing-table with small bookcase above. This is an admirable piece, probably of French make, gracefully proportioned and beautifully wrought, and adorned in a limited way with lines of brass inlaid in the surface of the wood. R. Sturgis.  |            |
| CARVED OAK CHAIR . . . . .  | 579        |
| Armchair with heavily carved frame. This piece is notable as showing in a very unusual way what it was that the revivers of elaborately carved furniture, in the years 1830-50 were trying to produce. The result of their work was disastrous—the most complete decadence possible to imagine; and this influence filled the houses of England and the United States with an ugly lot of heavily wrought pieces in walnut and oak. At one time it was almost impossible to get furniture of any pretence which was not marred by this exaggerated style of decoration. In these pieces, however, there is something of the seventeenth century vigour retained or revived. The projecting heads forming the ends of the arms are especially noticeable. R. Sturgis.  |            |
| UPRIGHT PIANO . . . . .   | 583        |
| Upright piano of the type established in the early days of that instrument—the second or third decade of the nineteenth century. The design of such a piece is, of course, akin to that of a cabinet, the weakness of the piano design being in this: that the front is never to open and yet must allow sound to be transmitted freely. From these conditions arises the filling of the great panel with silk arranged in an upholsterer's fashion, which is almost hopeless as a matter of effective design. The piece in question is well managed as regards its woodwork, in the awkward Georgian style, but still made decorative with some delicate inlay and very good wrought mouldings surrounding and holding each panel. R. Sturgis.   |            |
| CARD TABLES . . . . .   | FACING 584 |
| Two card tables, apparently a pair, with precisely the same adornment in each. One is shown open, and one shut, the adornment by a slight inlay in light material on the dark ground is of such a character as to indicate a later epoch than those which in this Part have been noted as having a decoration by means of inlay. This table might be of 1830 rather than of an earlier epoch. R. Sturgis.   |            |
| PIANO . . . . .   | 585        |
| Piano of a very early type, one in which the extremely simple form common to the spinet and harpsichord, and which have been commented upon in notes to illustrations in Part VII., is continued in the newer and more elaborate instrument of music. In the present case there is a delicate ornamentation of straight lines of inlay on the legs as well as on the body, and the top of each leg is marked by an oval plaquette. R. Sturgis.  |            |
| CARVED CHAIR FROM BOMBAY AND CARVED TEAK-WOOD STAND . . . . .   | 587        |
| The carved chair resting upon six feet has a circular cane seat and a semi-circular back in which are three panels pierced and carved in leaf designs. The wood is rich reddish brown   |            |

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in hue. The carved teak-wood stand accompanying it is also a fine specimen. The marble slab forming its top is framed by a border inlaid with brass. Some valuable pieces of porcelain originally owned by the Emperor of China stand upon it (see text). E. S.

## CARVED OAK CABINET . . . . . FACING 588

Although this massive and valuable specimen is nearly four square and exceedingly heavy, the eye is so charmed with the lightness of the carving and the arrangement of the panels that one is hardly conscious that it is composed entirely of straight lines. The prickly leaf is tastefully and gracefully entwined, and there is something about the treatment that suggests carving in stone. This piece is said to be of the fifteenth century. It stands upon the old ball foot, like the Dutch *kas* or *kos* (see pages 264-7). It may be compared with the specimen facing page 238. E. S.

## OLD SPANISH CABINET . . . . . 591

Vargueno; Spanish work of the seventeenth century—a very interesting piece. These cabinets were really made for transportation; compare what is said of the so-called traveling chest-of-drawers in former parts of this work. The vargueno when taken apart consisted of a completely self-contained square-cornered, flat-sided box with two sufficient handles and of a wholly separate stand, which of itself could on occasion be separated into three parts without much danger of marring the details of the workmanship. The present piece is a simple specimen, the little arcades on the interior being partly wrought in the wood and partly of turned spindle-like pieces split and applied flat side in to the surface. There is little costly decoration, inlay, carving and the like, but the piece is effective in the grandiose Spanish way. R. Sturgis.

## TABLE OF PERIOD OF LOUIS XIV. . . . . FACING 592

Table of Boulle work and with many of the characteristics of the best period of that work in the later years of the reign of Louis XV. No piece in the large collection which we have been passing in review is more strictly a collector's piece—would more strongly attract a lover of magnificent furniture—than the present table. Under all its elaborate and even fantastical decoration there is a certain severity of general design which keeps the whole perfectly together. R. Sturgis.

## CARVED OAK CHEST . . . . . 595

This specimen was imported from Spain. Its legs are somewhat similar to those of the chest on page 161, which is very simple and plain. Three panels in the front are also to be noticed upon the latter specimen, upon the chest facing page 178, and in that upon page 231, as well as upon the chests-with-drawers facing pages 176, 214, and 226. This Spanish chest may be compared with the one facing page 216, which is of the same general type; but the present example is carved on the ends and further enriched by massive metal hinges. It may also be compared with the chest facing page 24, which has four panels. The encircled rosette appears in the latter example, but quite differently treated. Here we have it in a form resembling the sunflower, the half disc appearing in the border above the panels. E. S.

## MAHOGANY PORTE-MANTEAUX . . . . . 599

Hat tree of the same style of bold carving which is noticed in connection with the piano and a sofa in Part VII. and with several four-post bedsteads in other parts of this work. In the present case the workman had a good opportunity to display his skill in arranging his carving, and he has used it creditably with perhaps a somewhat too bold handling, the result of which has been that his outline is indeterminate—the main lines being, as it were, contradicted by the extremely deep and bold sculpture. R. Sturgis.

## CHEST-UPON-CHEST . . . . . FACING 600

Tallboy of the close of the eighteenth century, a most effective piece, to be compared favourably with some which are described in earlier parts of this work. Such pieces, getting all their applied or incidental adornment by brass handles and scutcheons are made effective in the perfect adaptation of means to end and of the natural growth of the design out of the requirement of so many drawers, so large, and placed in such and such a way. R. Sturgis.

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| DESK . . . . .  | 601  |
| <p>Writing-table with desk fittings, pigeon holes and drawers above. The front of the raised part of this piece is closed by horizontal rotating shutters exactly like those shown in a sideboard in Part VII. This is a graceful piece of good proportions, but of severe simplicity of make. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| SOFA IN THE SHERATON STYLE . . . . .  | 602  |
| <p>Bench with back and arms of the kind called settee or more commonly, in view of the fact that its seat was evidently intended for upholstery, a "sofa," but of a special type. This is an admirable piece and might afford a valuable suggestion to modern designers. What would do more to make our drawing-rooms artistically effective than to resort to some such simple and obvious motive of design as that which is the characteristic of the piece before us? The free use of little columns in a long-drawn colonnade varied by the breaks in the top rail which mark the principal uprights and the use of a similar design for the four front legs of the piece—the general freedom and lightness of construction, the work of a man who had not feared to put in many parts in order that he may get those parts severally very slender and delicate, and the boldness with which he has divided the lower parts into three and the upper part into four main divisions—all of this goes to make a piece of furniture which it would be well to copy with such modifications as the new conditions may demand. The way to utilize such a piece is to set up cushions against the back which may indeed be tied in place with ribbons. Nor is there any reason why the seat should be unusually or disagreeably high. Such a piece as we have here is hardly a lounging sofa, but it is not desirable that the furniture of the drawing-room, of the dining-room or of the modern "hall" should have the effect of accommodation for loungers. A certain amount of straightness and of orderliness seems desirable. R. Sturgis.</p> |      |
| CHINA CABINET AND CHAIRS . . . . .  | 607  |
| <p>Cabinet arranged to serve as a sideboard in a small room or as a secondary sideboard where there is a larger one. The table top below is left unobstructed for utilitarian purposes, and the little cupboard above with two shelves and glass doors with prettily arranged saah bars is meant evidently for the keeping of a very choice tea set indeed. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD . . . . .  | 608  |
| <p>Sideboards not unlike several which are shown in Part VII. The present one has a certain architectural dignity given it by the columns which carry as if an entablature the whole system of drawers in one horizontal row, and especially that part of it which projects and carries a sort of attic at either end. The result is that a stately piece is produced but at the expense of considerable inconvenience with regard to the opening of the doors. There is a good deal of metal mounting as in the caps and bases of the columns, but the projecting knobs are of cut glass. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| MAHOGANY CHEST-OF-DRAWERS AND DRESSING-GLASS . . . . .  | 608  |
| <p>Bureau with dressing-glass. In this piece the Empire Style seems to have been extended somewhat beyond its bounding epoch 1815; for the piece can hardly be as early as that. The use of the appliques of metal is the chief mark of the style names, and those of the colonnettes are characteristic; but the decoration of the cushioned-shaped drawer front and the anthemions set horizontally in a narrow band above are apparently inlays. The ornaments of the mirror frame are also, as it seems, flush with the surface. If this is so the piece is somewhat unusual—an outlying composition—a piece of work doubly interesting because difficult to classify. As a dressing-bureau the piece is sensible and in artistic composition it is certainly good. R. Sturgis.</p>   |      |
| DRESSING-GLASS . . . . .  | 611  |
| <p>Toilet glass and stand with drawers for toilet articles. These pieces were essential in days when large mirrors were too expensive for the custom of mounting them upon bureau tops</p>  |      |

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| <p>to have become general. The introduction of the modern dressing bureau has done away with these picturesque little articles of furniture, and that is a pity. Room should be found for them and a use for them provided; the thing is too pretty to be abandoned in haste. R. Sturgis.</p>  |      |
| <p><b>LOW CASE-OF-DRAWERS</b> . . . . .</p> <p>The case of drawers has been so fully described in Part V. that it is not necessary to dwell upon this specimen which should be compared with those on pages 331, 339, 343 and facing 322 and 326. It resembles the one facing page 322 in having but one top drawer, but it differs from all these examples in having but one drawer below this. The terms "high boy" and "low boy" commonly used and without authority during the past few years, are avoided by all connoisseurs in furniture. The brass ring handles on the low case of drawers in question may be later additions, for the usual handle for pieces of this period is the fuchia, columbine, bell-flower or pearl drop that appears on the front-piece to part V. and on pages 217, 218, 343 and 345. E. S.</p>   | 615  |
| <p><b>TWO CHESTS-OF-DRAWERS</b> . . . . . <b>FACING</b></p> <p>A bureau which may be called a reflex of the French Empire Style, though in the present case the caps and bases of the colonnettes are not repeated and the piece is less richly adorned.</p> <p>The second is a piece of the same character, and this seems to point to a gradually increasing tendency in America during the early years of the nineteenth century to build chests-of-drawers with this curious architectural framework of colonnettes and horizontal members above. In the present case the elaborately carved colonnettes seem a reminiscence of the bedposts of the great four-posters shown in previous parts of this work. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 616  |
| <p><b>BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Chest of drawers with bookcase above. Pieces of this character are shown in Parts V. and VI., and the reader should compare these examples with the one before us. This one is of extreme simplicity except for the inlaid oval in front of the writing-desk lid, and which contains an eagle—all in different coloured woods. Such glazed doors as these were commonly lined with thin silk, apparently with the feeling that the glass must be cut and the sash bars arranged in decorative pattern and that as a result the books would not be well shown; but the convenience of seeing the books clearly is not to be gainsaid. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 617  |
| <p><b>CHAIR AND TWO TABLES</b> . . . . . <b>FACING</b></p> <p>Two stands with tripod feet and a chair, all three inlaid with delicate ornamental patterns and bouquets of flowers, the material of the inlay stated to be mother-of-pearl. The pieces, though perhaps Oriental in make, are altogether European in design. The Dutch received from the eastern islands, Portugal from Western India, the Dutch from China and Japan many pieces which in this way were made by a people unfamiliar with the designs which they were expected to execute. The result was always seen in a certain clumsiness of general design. This was thought to be redeemed by an extreme richness of adornment which in Europe would have been difficult to procure, and almost of necessity limited to persons of the highest fortune. Such pieces of furniture are really "Museum pieces," and are chiefly valuable as specimens of beautiful furniture. R. Sturgis.</p> | 618  |
| <p><b>MAHOGANY CHEST-OF-DRAWERS</b> . . . . .</p> <p>Chest-of-drawers in which a workman of about 1780 tried to recall the rounded forms of an earlier and richer style than his. The curves are not well drawn nor well combined; but the whole piece and its very elaborate base, with the four feet and unusually large brass handles and scutcheons taken into account, is quaint and picturesque beyond what is usual. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 621  |



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| <p><b>CARVED MAHOGANY CHAIR AND CELLARET . FACING</b></p> <p>This chair is probably the work of some Charleston cabinet-maker. The back is almost identical with those chairs on pages 148 and 447, which are also Charleston pieces and very probably of native work. The back is delicately carved and the embowed top rail is particularly graceful. The cellaret at its side may be compared with the one facing page 126, which is also bound with brass. The cellaret came into use with the mahogany sideboard about the beginning of the Revolution, and belongs to the Heppelwhite school. This specimen is richly carved and stands upon six feet somewhat similar to those of the chair in the same illustration. E. S.</p>  | 622  |
| <p><b>BOOKCASE AND DESK . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>Writing-desk with bookcase. A very beautiful piece, not unlike in character of the design to the dressing bureau facing page 608. The same method of decoration by inlay, probably metallic, seems to have been used on the horizontal bands, and is certainly employed for the narrow lines of the edges here and there, and those which surround and adorn the larger flat surfaces. The mouldings of the panels, as of the two drawers beneath the writing desk, are effective pieces of the familiar ovolo decoration, and those which surround the glass of the doors above are still more spirited and effective in design. Larger ornaments of metal in high relief are used upon the legs below. This is a refined and delicate design, having a peculiar charm of form and aspect. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 624  |
| <p><b>CHAIRS IN THE SHERATON STYLE . . . . .</b></p> <p>Chair and armchair which are of the same design as the sofa shown on page 602. It is noticeable that the same design which was good for the sofa is good for the chairs too; though it is in the sofa that it shows its full decorative effect. R. Sturgis.</p>   | 625  |
| <p><b>QUEEN ANNE CHAIRS . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>Two unusually handsome chairs, both with regard to their form and luxurious upholstery, date respectively from 1700 to 1710. They are, therefore, of the Queen Anne period and their natural surroundings would be a room carved by Grinling Gibbons or decorated in the elegant style of Marot. Their dignity and elegance need no comment. E. S.</p>  | 628  |
| <p><b>CHINESE TABLE WITH SLATE TOP . . . . .</b></p> <p>Table in which the extreme severity of the piece is modified by the moulded surfaces of the legs and by a very prettily worked moulding at the bottom of the side rails. The legend on the metal plate inserted on the rail says the piece was brought from Europe to Salem in 1812, but the design suggests no European school of that time or of the previous quarter century. If made in China, as asserted, the piece must have been copied closely by Chinese workmen from a design furnished by the European who ordered it. R. Sturgis.</p>  | 629  |
| <p><b>DINING-ROOM . . . . . FACING</b></p> <p>In this interesting room the wooden mantelpiece and the corner cupboard or buffet are of the same style, and the dado dates probably from the same epoch. It is most unfortunate that the precise details of the delicate moulding cannot be shown to the reader in a photograph; but the difficulties accompanying indoor photography are well known and are scarcely to be overcome by ordinary means. The cupboard is more elaborate than any of the three shown separately in the Plates of Part V. The simpler work of the time is commonly more tasteful than that which possesses more elaborate details, and this because there was no great school of architecture giving constant examples of highly decorated buildings from which inspiration could be drawn for domestic architecture. The transportation of the Georgian style from England to America was naturally more successful in its simpler examples than in pieces more elaborately worked out. It is only in the details of delicate plaster work that the more florid European designs of the eighteenth century were brought successfully</p> | 632  |

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to America; and the inspiration of these is almost always French—nor is it quite clear how this French influence came in.

In the case before us the filling of the front of the buffet with glazed sash, of which the sash bars are arranged in an ingenious and complicated pattern, is one of the most noticeable details. We shall find similar sash, though less elaborate, in a bookcase in the present Part, and there is mention in notes to illustrations in Part V. of the possible replacing of such sash as this by solid panels. It was such glazed doors, also, of which there was mention as having been very commonly lined by green silk, when it was desired to conceal the papers or unbound books within. When used, as in the present case, to display old family china or silver, no such concealment was desired. The sideboard in this room is an admirable piece of design and of practical utility. It is one of the best examples of the severity introduced from France towards the close of the eighteenth century—and which belongs to what we call the *Style Louis Seize*—a severity which caused to be superseded the exaggerated scrolls of 1750 by the wisely understood modern adaptation of classical feeling characteristic of the style named R. Sturgis.

## CARVED ROSEWOOD CHAIR . . . . . FACING 634

In the course of this work we have noted the splendid and varied carving in oak and mahogany, but carving in rosewood has not been dwelt upon at length. Chippendale made frequent use of this wood, but, during the Louis Seize period and after, rosewood inlaid with brass was considered very elegant. This chair is richly carved, the top rails ending in a species of pine-cone. The back and seat are stuffed and covered with pale yellow brocade. E. S.

## CHINA CUPBOARD AND TWO SHERATON CHAIRS . . . . . FACING 638

Corner cupboard of unusually elaborate design, very fine and rich, and with an unusual effect obtained by hanging the glazed doors outside of the niche in which the shelves are placed. The crowning piece with the double fronton and vase is unusually well designed, and is fitting and reasonable for such a decorative piece of furniture as this. R. Sturgis.

## CARVED EBONY SOFA . . . . . FACING 640

This sofa or settee is one of two belonging to the splendid set of Chinese furniture owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithtown, L. I., described in the first note to illustrations of Part VI. Examples from this collection appear as the frontispiece to Part VI., and facing 416, 424 and 487. The top and lower rails are composed of delicate scrolls and leaves; the legs are cabriole; and the back and seat are covered with crimson satin. The sofa cushion is black with Chinese flowers and birds embroidered in bright colours. E. S.

## “FANCY” SETTEE . . . . . 641

Settee with finely made rush seat, a most interesting piece of the more intelligent, more sincere and reasonable designing of the first years of the nineteenth century. Painting has been used in a very slight and ineffectual way for the adornment of the back; moreover, lines of darker colour have been drawn upon the smaller slats. It is not from the painting that the piece derives its unmistakable charm, but from the simplicity of its make and the logical if not altogether graceful composition. R. Sturgis.

## MAHOGANY SOFA . . . . . 643

This very simple sofa is of the Sheraton school, as may be proved by comparing it with the one on page 479. The piece is covered with dark garnet velvet. Sheraton would arrange four hard square pillows at equal distances along the back. E. S.

## MAHOGANY SOFA . . . . . 645

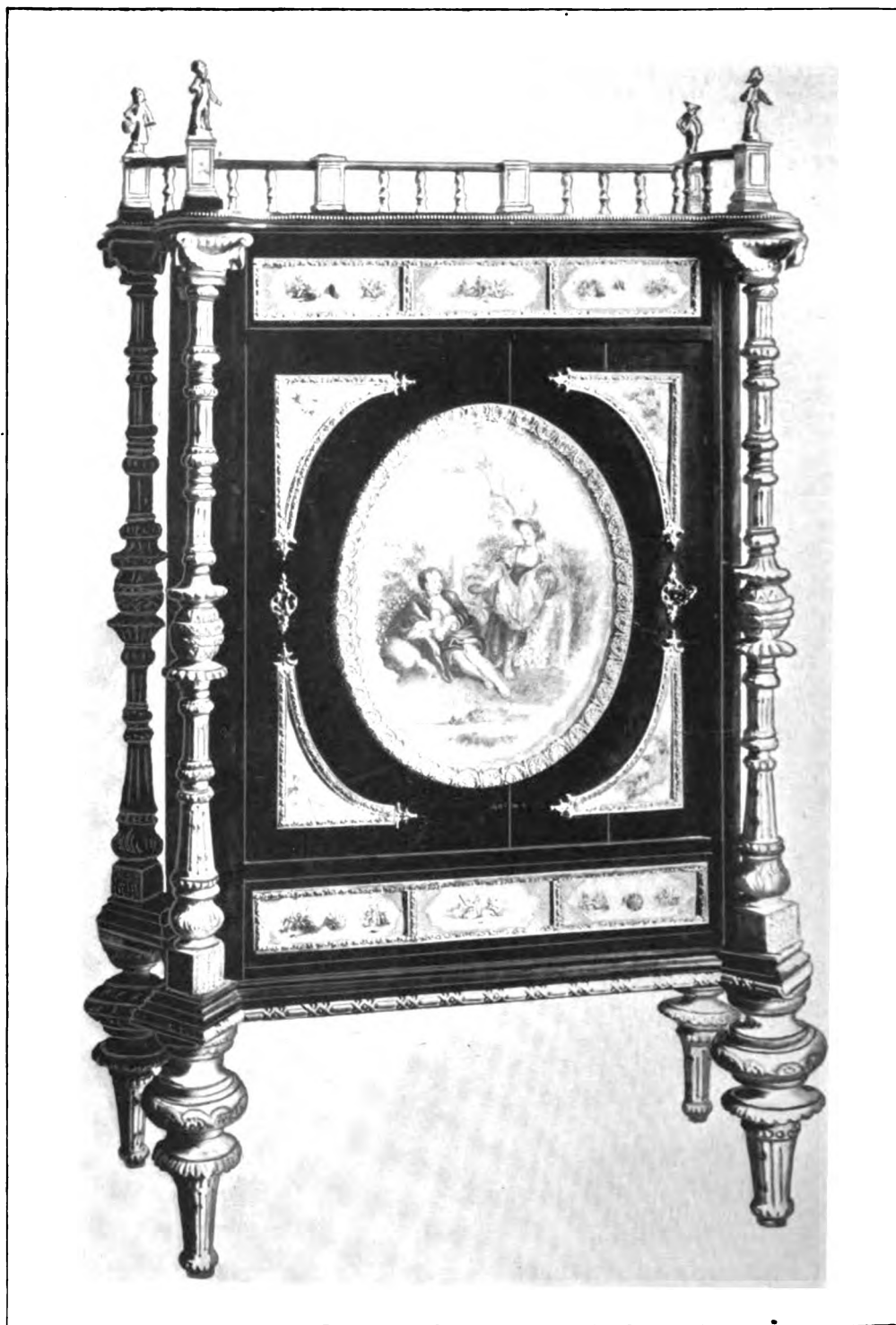
The sofa with mahogany frame shown in this illustration is a familiar piece of furniture in many old families. It may be compared with the one facing 472 and 510. The feet are almost identical with those of the latter. Of course the sofa should be furnished with a round sofa cushion, similar to the one on page 651, under each scroll. E. S.

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| SOFA . . . . .  | FACING 648 |
| <p>This peculiar and somewhat ungraceful shape is a comparatively late composition. It is best appreciated when one lies down to rest in it with a book. The back is delightfully supported and when the feet rest upon the other end, the ease and comfort of the position can hardly be described. E. S.</p>  |            |
| SOFA . . . . .  | 649        |
| <p>In this illustration we have an excellent example of the clumsy and ugly furniture that succeeded the Empire style. The feet are particularly unsightly. The only attempt at grace is the swan neck which forms the scroll ends. E. S.</p>   |            |
| SOFA . . . . .  | 651        |
| <p>We may confidently date this sofa about 1821, for we find similar models in the London fashion papers of that year. The curled up end is somewhat suggestive of a toboggan; the other end that of the conventional sofa of the nineteenth century, as we may see by referring to pages 573 and 645, and those facing 472 and 510. It is also interesting to compare it with another Charleston piece on page 493, called a "French Sofa." For a list of fashionable sofas see pages 539-540. E. S.</p> |            |

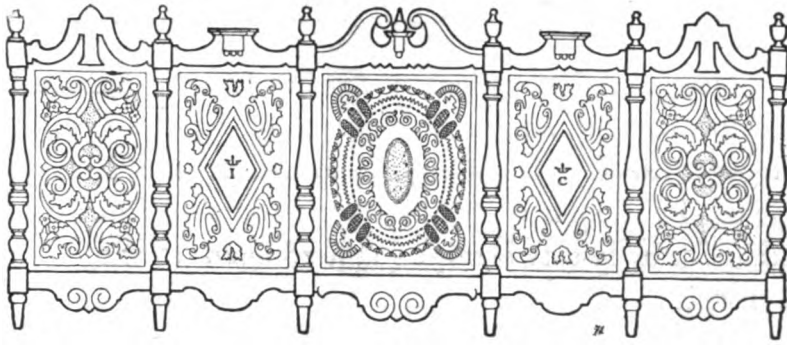


1875



PORCELAIN CABINET

*In the rooms of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society. See page 581.*



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

## PART VIII.

### Woods, Upholstery and Styles

OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY



HERETO little has been said of the new styles that ushered in the nineteenth century. A little space may therefore be spared for examination of this period.

English invention seems to have become exhausted after Sheraton's death, and, with the exception of a little Gothic, the native work found its origin in France.

The French Revolution, in forming anew the social state of France, brought great changes. A fanatical admiration for the antique became more conspicuous day by day in the usages of life and in all the details of costume.

In the last days of Louis XVI., furniture already showed thinness of form and a seeking after simplicity that revealed an imitation of Roman marbles. The arrival of a society that worshipped the memories of the republics

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of Greece and Italy served to hasten the movement. Furniture became Athenian, and, soon after the expedition to Egypt, the buildings on the banks of the Nile were copied. Public taste proscribed the old traditions of elegance of the last two reigns and adopted exotic costume and furniture of a theatrical and monotonous character. The painter, Louis David, was largely responsible then for the æsthetic doctrines which condemned as bad taste the furniture ornamented with mosaic and marquetry. French workmen, scattered by the closing of the *ateliers*, and discouraged by this transformation of styles, lost interest in artistic production, which consequently disappeared amid the general indifference. This date saw the beginning of the separation of art and industry.

Under the Empire, the architect Percier was ordered to refurnish the residences which had been stripped by the successive sales after the fall of the monarchy. His numerous designs denote a fertile imagination, but he had to give satisfaction to a warrior, a son of the Revolution, who wanted to surround himself with memories of the military campaigns in Egypt and Italy. Percier set himself the task of multiplying warlike emblems on all objects of furniture; he copied the military tent for the office, as well as alcoves in the bedrooms that recalled the altars in the museums in Rome, or the Pompeian triclinium.

Jacob Desmalter was the most authoritative cabinet-maker during the First Empire. He it was who was charged with the execution of the large mahogany consoles and buffets supported by sphynx figures in bronze which garnished the apartments in the palace of the Tuileries and the royal *châteaux*. These orders were executed with a complete ignorance of rules of art. We

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do not know which to deplore the most, the massive and ungraceful forms, or the pretentiousness.

The above is the explanation given by M. Victor Champier of the origin of the Empire Style. The course of this style may be traced in the fashion publications of the day, from which the following notes have been extracted.



EMPIRE SOFA

Owned by Mrs. William Young, Baltimore, Md. See page 645.

“Since last season considerable alterations and improvements have been made in furniture and in ornamental decorations in the interior of tasteful houses. The Egyptian *costume*, at best but indifferently understood, is totally laid aside, and a style of furniture drawn from the florid Ionic is substituted. We shall now be no longer disgusted with the horrid imitations from what is called the *antique*, and shall rejoice to see that species of barbarism completely exploded, and the mansions of the great again become the seat of the Arts and Sciences, by being stored with movables of domestic use, designed after the purest Grecian models. A more grand and beautiful outline is adopted in



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the shape of each piece of furniture. The whole are altogether divested of superfluous arabesque ornaments, which, in general, have been placed without taste or discrimination. Among the alterations in the wall-decorations, of state apartments, the introduction of *flock*, covering the apartments in one uniform colour, has been attempted with but indifferent success; though the effect is rich, if managed well, and is certainly next to hangings of silk. All mahogany furniture is now divested of inlaid ornaments. Chairs, tables, sofas, etc., used in drawing-rooms, are all covered with gold, or a mixture of bronze and gold. The japan is now entirely confined to *the third class of gentry.*" (1806.)

"Rooms in pearl colour, shaded with dark and light lines, relieved with styles of a darker hue and gilt mouldings; pilasters painted in bronze, on a gold ground, are also introduced. Architraves and mouldings may be gilt, or in bronze and light satin-wood. Doors, dove satin, satin-wood with black mouldings, or light satin-wood, with black mouldings. Paper to imitate cloth is also very fashionable, with gilt mouldings and palmites. Pilasters, painted bronze on a light ground, or arabesque devices in gold, on a light ground, are over doors, and glasses to suit.

"Antique candelabras, rosewood and gold pier-tables, and the chimney-pieces, are most adapted to receive lights on which are introduced bronze and ormolu figures, etc., with branches to receive wax candles. The antique and Grecian lamps in bronze and ormolu are also suspended in the centre of rooms or alcoves. Window curtains of chintz with Roman and antique draperies and silk fringes, etc., to correspond, are truly elegant. Chairs and sofas still continue from drawings after the antique, in rosewood



LOUIS XVI. VITRINE

*Used as a bookcase. Owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass. See page 58r.*



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and gold, mahogany and gold, or black and gold.”  
(1807.)

“The Classical ornaments introduced in furniture are now more closely than ever confined to the Grecian and the Etruscan; the Egyptian having been so badly understood, it has fallen into disrepute, although possessing many beauties for particular apartments, and capable of producing the most grand effect for candle-light embellishment.

“The Gothic style being so well adapted to country mansions, will always be used in England. Its ornaments and component parts are in themselves extremely elegant, and capable of producing great effect: they require taste alone in the selection to produce a pleasing composition. Such decoration should be wholly confined to gold, or a royal blue, or crimson grounds, or on oak, or scarlet grounds, in which case the decoration intended for the walls should follow the same style. Painted glass should be avoided in colours as various as the rainbow; we allude to the gaudy manner of filling up Gothic windows, now so much in request, two colours at most being necessary. These colours may be opposed, so as to form shades of the same colour, as are so well managed in the Colleges at Oxford, the effect of which need only be seen to produce its adoption. We hope to see the taste of this country carried to a greater pitch of excellence than that which now exists in France. England may now boast of its mechanics; at no period did there exist so great a portion of talent in this country; we mean among the natives, and not foreigners.” (1808.)

“Of architectural ornament, the most brilliant specimen is a *boudoir* in the Grecian style; this apartment is octangular, four of the panels are of mirror, the others ornamented with pilasters embossed richly, and relieved by

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gilding. Those parts of the walls not ornamented are covered with a rich mazarine blue velvet; the ceiling is covered in eight compartments corresponding with the sides, and decorated with antique paintings copied from the finest specimens of Herculaneum, and the centre forms a dome from which the apartment is lighted. Ottomans are placed in the recesses, and the chairs are Grecian with stuffed backs and seats of velvet; the whole forming a blaze of splendour as elegant as unique. The Gothic, though exploded from our buildings, is, however, still preserved in our furniture; we have heard of a 'Gothic state bed for an infant' who in the course of a few months must have Gothic bats and balls or a Gothic *babyhouse!*"

"We observe with pleasure a more tasteful arrangement daily taking place; the gaudy colours of the chintz and calico furniture have given place to a more chaste style, in which two colours only are employed to produce the appearance of damask. The same style is adopting in carpets, giving apartments a uniform and pleasing appearance. Bronze still prevails as a ground-work for chairs, sofas, cabinets, etc., and will always be classic when delicately and sparingly assisted with gold ornaments. A great deal of black has been used in chairs, etc., but the appearance is harsh, and the contrast too violent to be approved by genuine and correct taste; its cheapness can alone make its use tolerable. Manchester coloured velvets, used for furniture and curtains, produce a rich effect. Poles richly decorated form the best and most fashionable supporters for draperies, and in all probability will continue throughout the present year."

"A considerable alteration has taken place in the style



LADY'S ESCRITOIRE

*In the rooms of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society. See page 581.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



LOUIS XVI. WRITING-DESK

Owned by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass. See page 581.

of fitting up apartments within these few months. Instead of a gaudy display in colouring, a more pleasing and chaste effect is produced in the union of two tints. This has been happily managed in calicoes, producing an appearance equal to silk, particularly in the richer and more brilliant colours. We have witnessed this effect in a full crimson damask pattern, lined with blue embossed calico;—the manufacture of Messrs. Dudding & Nelson. A sim-



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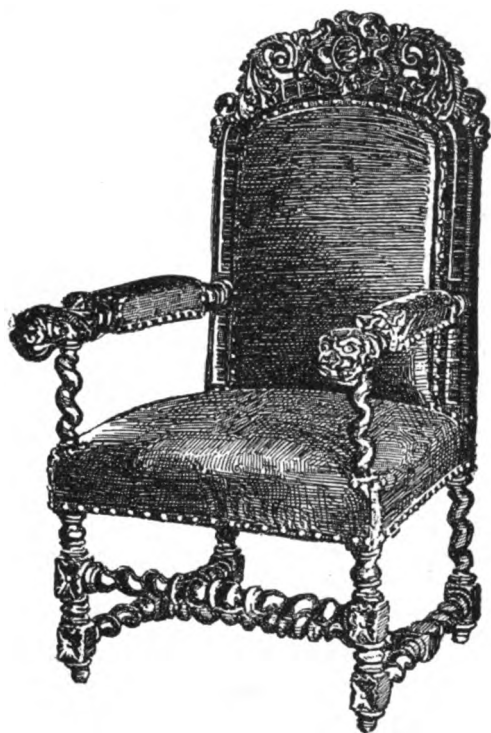
ilar taste has been followed with some success in paper-hanging, exhibiting a rich appearance when finished with gold, or black and gold mouldings. Carpets, especially for principal apartments, have partially fallen into the same good taste. This mode of furnishing, producing in the predominant features a composed and uniform effect, aids greatly the *meubles* of a grand room, especially where gilding is introduced. Should silk become objectionable from its expense, we strongly recommend the use of these new patterns. They are particularly calculated for candle-light effects. Dining Parlour.—The coverings of floors are in crimson drugget, milled to a proper substance, and panelled with a border of black furniture cloth, producing a warm and rich appearance. . . . Chandeliers of cut glass on a metal framework, with ornaments of *or moulu* and bronze, are generally used for illuminating rooms, affording a brilliant and diffused light from the centre of the ceiling.”

“ Heavy and cumbrous objects are giving place to airy and light designs. The large cornice, the ponderous mantel-piece, and massy chairs yield the palm to modern inventions founded on the firm basis of observation of nature.”

“ It cannot but be highly gratifying to every person of genuine taste to observe the revolution which has, within these few years, taken place in the furniture and decorations of the apartments of people of fashion. In consequence of this revolution, effected principally by the study of the antique and the refined notions of beauty derived from that source, the barbarous Egyptian style, which a few years since prevailed, is succeeded by the classic elegance which characterized the most polished ages of Greece and Rome.” (1809.)

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The fashion-plates of the day contain many examples of Gothic designs in oak and mahogany. In May, 1810, one paper gives a design of a Gothic sofa upholstered with



CARVED OAK CHAIR

Owned by Robert Colby, Esq., New York. See page 581.

“French stuffing and morocco purple leather in mahogany, satin-wood or wainscot for library.”

Sideboards were also being carved in oak, and to this period may belong the sideboard appearing as the frontispiece to Part VII. One design of this date is thus recommended: “The sideboard should be made entirely of mahogany, or of fine oak, which has been so generally adopted of late in mansions furnished in the ancient style. This, in fact, is the more consistent, and therefore the

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more tasteful, mode of decoration. Mahogany, however, may be used with great propriety, and perhaps the effect of that wood, on the whole, is richer than that produced by oak."

"In France it is now considered essential that the architect should design the furniture as well as the building, as unity of character is highly valued, which cannot be obtained unless the whole is guided by the same mind. To a very different practice this country is indebted for the ill effects of our buildings, furnished as they are under as many feelings of *taste* as there may be articles of furniture. . . . The manufacture of oak into furniture and other articles has undergone an extraordinary improvement in point of workmanship, and it is now wrought with so much elegance as to rival the more expensive woods of other countries."

"In our own time, the French style gave way to the Roman and that to the Greek; and as if the early ages must of necessity afford purer sources for research, the Persian and the Egyptian have been brought forward and have failed to supersede those chaste models of harmony and truth."

"Gothic has fair claim to be considered as legitimate art, although so long rejected as an adventitious mixture of beauty and deformity. Probably the very term by which it has been known has done much to injure its reputation; as we may have associated with it ideas of ignorance and barbarism. It is now almost rescued from these calumnies by the means that have been afforded for the cultivation of its beauties in the vast growth of foreign intercourse, riches, and leisure, which are the ostensible patrons of genius and taste." (1813.)

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A carved oak chair belonging to Robert Colby, Esq., appears on page 579. The stretchers, legs, and supports to the arms are turned spirals, the back of the chair is elaborately carved. The grotesque heads may be compared with those on page 65, and facing pages 424 and 434. The chair is covered with dark-green leather fastened with brass nails.

A card table of this period, with painted flowers, in the Valentine Museum, and represented on page 505, came from the family of Sir Fulwar Skipwith, having been purchased from the old family residence, *Prestwold*, in Mecklenburg County, Va.

A lady's *escritoire*, of the Louis XV. period, gilded, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and decorated with handsome brasses, faces page 576.

Facing page 571 is a cabinet, which, like the above, belongs to the estate of Mrs. Mary Parker Corning. The plaques and columns are of Dresden china and the frame is of ebony ornamented with gold. Facing 618 are a table and chair, gilded, lacquered and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. These belonged also to the Corning family. The small table is owned by Mr. James B. Sanders of Albany.

A desk of the Louis XVI. period, imported from France by Dr. James Read Chadwick, Boston, Mass., is on page 577. The legs are reeded, and inlaid with brass. Brass mouldings outline the drawers and doors. This is of the same date as the *vitrine* (glass case) facing page 574, which is likewise ornamented with brass work.

Two handsome card tables, facing page 584, are rose-wood inlaid with brass. They now belong to Robert A. Boit, Esq., of Boston, Mass., and were purchased in London by his grandfather, John Hubbard, Esq., of Boston, at the

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sale of the Russian Ambassador's furniture. These pieces were brought to this country between 1815 and 1825.

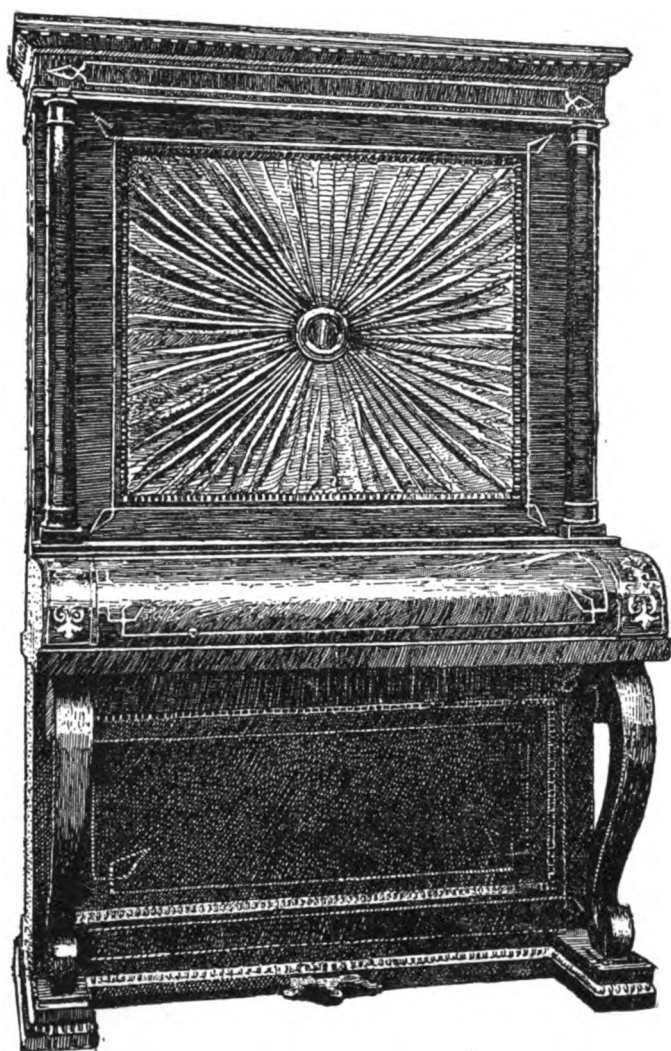
The handsome bookcase and desk belonging also to Robert A. Boit, Esq., Boston, Mass., and facing page 624, is said to be by Riesener.

We have already spoken on pages 424-428 of the pianos that were imported and made in this country. One by Georgius Astor appears on page 585, and another, said to have been the first upright piano made in America, is seen on page 583. This was made by the Loud Brothers, of Philadelphia, and was presented to Memorial Hall, Philadelphia, by Mr. Isaac A. Schwarz. Thomas Loud, of London, was one of the first to make uprights.

In 1825, T. Loud, a pianoforte maker from London, settles in Canal Street, and has a "Philadelphia-made pianoforte" for sale in the same year. Space forbids any account of the evolution of the piano, but since we have seen that the virginal, spinet and harpsichord were of frequent occurrence in the inventories, we may briefly define the different instruments. The virginal was the English name of the spinet, and, according to Scaliger (born in 1484), the name came from the introduction of little pointed quills or plectra, and as the crow-quill plectrum somewhat resembled a thorn (*spina*), he derives from it the name of the instrument. The French called it *espinette* (*épinette*) from *espine* or *épine*, thorn. The name virginals was employed because maids and virgins played on them. This name passed out of use during the Restoration in England, and the word spinet (or spinnet) was adopted, as well as the new wing form.

The harpsichord is, however, quite a different instrument, and regarding this we may quote A. J. Hipkins, the

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



UPRIGHT PIANO

Made by Loud and Brothers, Philadelphia ; now in Memorial Hall, Philadelphia. See page 582.

recognized authority on the old keyboard stringed instruments. He says :

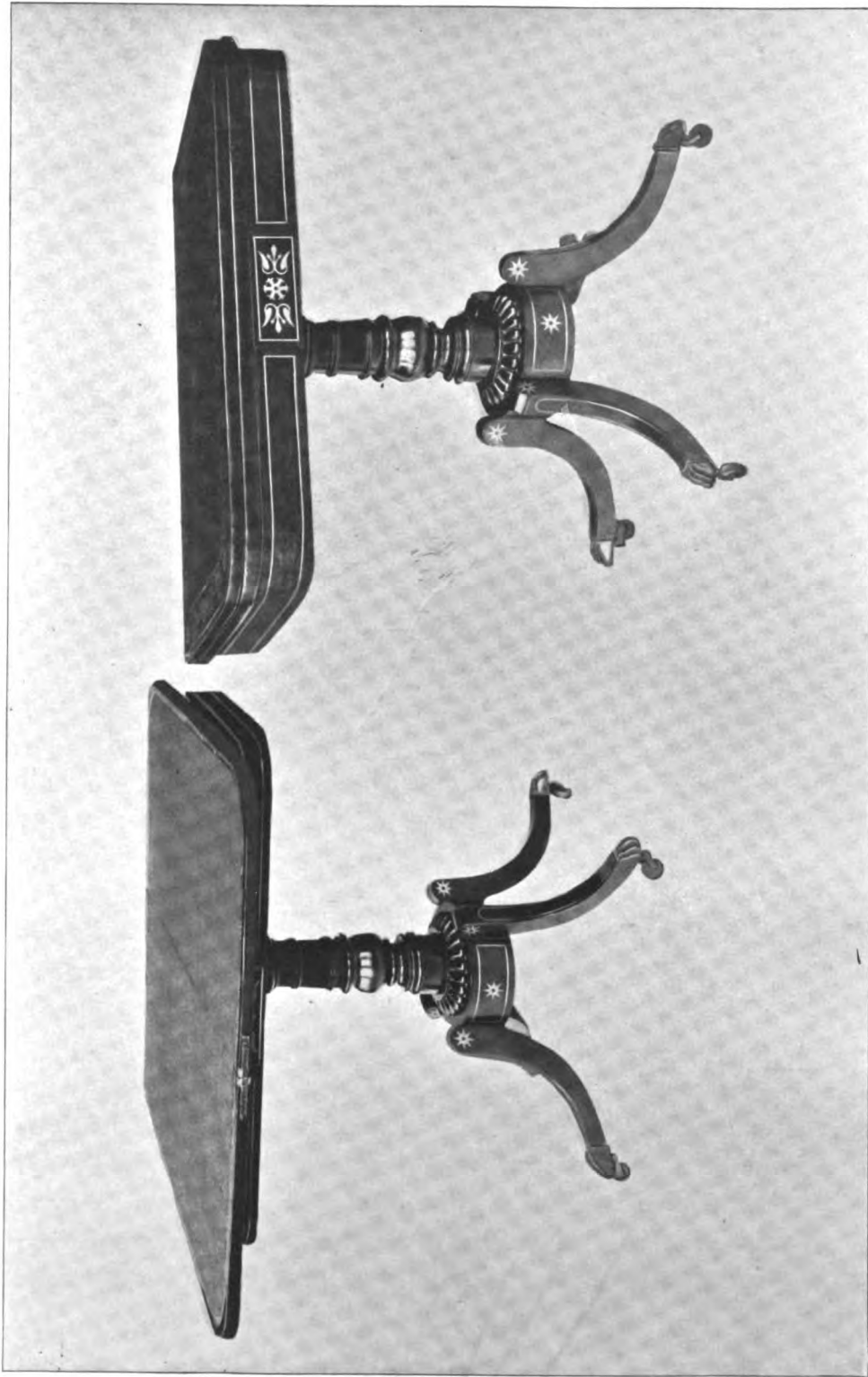
“The harpsichord is a double, triple, and in some instances, quadruple, spinet, the sounds being excited by a jack or quill plectrum, the same as in the spinet or virgi-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

nal. In other words, instead of one string to a note, as in the spinet or virginal, the harpsichord has two, three, and sometimes, although rarely, four. . . . The importance of the harpsichord during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was very great. Where the grand piano would now go, the harpsichord went. . . . The complex nature of the harpsichord required a larger and a differently shaped case to that of the spinet, the grand piano being prefigured by it. From this peculiarity of form the Germans called it *Flügel* or wing, also *Kielflügel* from the plectrum (*kiel*, quill) causing the sound production. The Dutch, Flemish, and French named it from the tail or long continuation *Staartstuk*, *Clavecin à queue*."

"We find in the name a recognition of the harp shape, the lower bass strings requiring the harp disposition rather than the trapeze one of the spinet. Galilei says the harpsichord was so named because it represented an *Arpa Giacente* or couched (lying down) harp. The harpsichord appears nearly as early as the spinet; in order of time there is very little between them." Hence, it will be seen that the harpsichord and spinet are two distinct instruments and must never be confused.

In 1792, Dodds & Claus, at the Musical Instrument Manufactory, 66 Queen Street, New York, advertise as follows: "The Piano-Forte is become so exceedingly fashionable in Europe that few polite families are without it. This much-esteemed instrument forms an agreeable accompaniment to the female voice, takes up but little room, may be moved with ease, and consequently kept in tune with but little attention, so that it is on that account superior to the harpsichord. The improvements which Messrs. Dodds & Claus have made in the forte piano have



CARD-TABLES

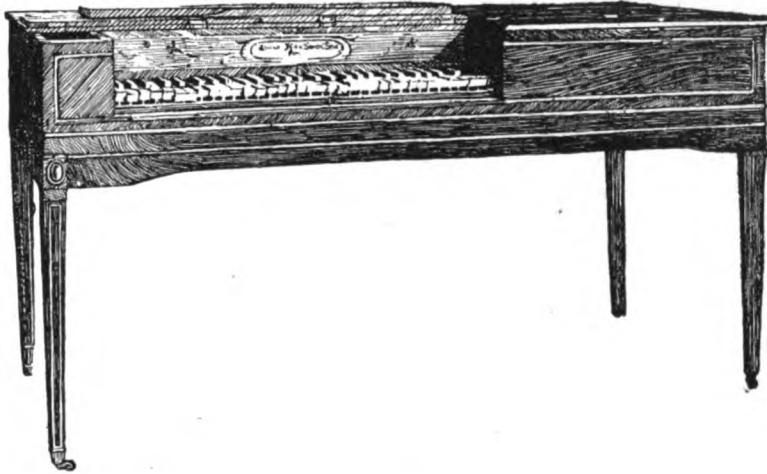
Owned by Mr. Robert A. Boit, Boston, Mass. See pages 581-2.



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rendered it much more acceptable than those imported. The introduction of their newly-invented hammers and dampers is acknowledged to be a great improvement, as also the means they have taken to prepare their wood to stand the effect of our climate, which imported instruments never do, but are sure to suffer not only from the



PIANO

Made by Georgius Astor, No. 26 Wyck Street, London, now in the Glen-Sanders house, Scotia, N. Y.  
See page 582.

agitation of the vessel but the saline quality of the seas. One great advantage to the purchaser is that Messrs. Dodds & Claus make it an invariable rule to repair any instrument that may prove defective in the workmanship if applied to *within two years after delivery.*"

Among the woods used during the last half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century, were oak for wainscoting, and cedar for doors; but the doors about this time were also made of mahogany. Where the woodwork had to be painted or gilt, which was done extensively about this time, it was of deal; even the carvings were painted or gilt, so that one wood was as good

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

as another for that purpose, but deal was the most economical. Pear, cedar and lime were much used by the carvers of this period, as they were more suitable for the tender work required for flowers, etc. Grinling Gibbons used chiefly lime-tree; oak for church panellings and mouldings; and sometimes cedar in the architraves of large mansions; pear-wood or box-wood for medallion portraits. Elm was sometimes used for various necessary articles about the house, such as dressers, and also ash, beech, birch, and poplar of the three varieties—white, black, and aspen—sycamore was much used; in fact, in some old houses in England the floors are of sycamore, and the wainscot of poplar. Walnut was extensively used—both English and Italian—effect being gained by contrasting the plain wood with “Burr” centres. Amboyna and rosewood were also used. Chestnut was, at an earlier date, used in the substantial parts of buildings, and, in old houses, is often mistaken even by good workmen for oak, which it so greatly resembles in colour and substance. Ebony mouldings were used by the Dutch cabinet-makers. Maple, yew, and cherry were also in use. Pear-tree was cut into boards, and occasionally took the place of oak, while veneers of pollard oak were used in centres of panels. Among the woods used in combination, we find one cabinet of oak and cedar inlaid with rosewood: this dates about 1620. Another, about 1690, is an example of the cabinet that used to be made when the heir came of age, on which occasion every kind of wood that grew on the estate was used in its construction. Therefore, we have pollard oak, thorn acacia, sycamore, walnut, rosewood, burr walnut and pear wood.

A carved oak cabinet of the fifteenth century, be-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

longing to Mr. Henry Fitz-Waters, Salem, Mass., faces page 588. It is of the same period as the cupboard



CARVED CHAIR FROM BOMBAY AND CARVED TEAK-WOOD STAND

Owned by Mrs. Thomas Small, Charleston, S.C. See page 590.

facing page 238, though the workmanship is somewhat more elaborate.

Before the tropical forests of the Old and the New World had been explored for the woods of beautiful grain and colour that delighted the worker in marquetry, the inlaying and veneering were principally done with native woods. Ebony, of course, was always known and prized. *Palissandre*, or violet-wood, from Guiana, was also used during the seventeenth century; as also was rosewood for inlays. None of the European woods has the deep and warm tints of the tropical products, but their markings are often very beautiful. The yew, which, with its

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

other lines, blends a slight trace of pink or rose, and has a very rich appearance, was the wood used for the finest and most costly works. This wood was among the furniture of Louis XIV. The common veneering timber was walnut; but as this has few of those variegations, technically called "curls," the works ornamented with it were somewhat deficient in beauty. The knotty parts of pollard oaks and pollard elms were much better adapted for the purpose of ornament, although the grain of both is open and apt to rise; and so these were sometimes turned to account.

The exotic woods used before 1830 were the following :

Rosewood, principally from Brazil, in logs about eighteen inches wide. The more distinct the darker parts were from the purple-red ground, the more the wood was esteemed. The veneers of rosewood averaged nine to the inch.

Kingwood, also from Brazil, is extremely hard. It shows black veins on a chocolate ground.

Beef-wood, from New Holland, was principally used for forming borders to work in which the larger woods were employed. In colour it is pale red, and not so clouded as mahogany.

Tulip-wood is very hard, and its hue is of a clouded red and yellow. It was principally used in bordering, and in small articles such as tea-caddies and ladies' work-tables.

Zebra-wood, brown on a white ground clouded with black, was cheap, and was employed in larger work such as tables.

Satin-wood, well known for its brilliant yellow colour with delicate glowing shades, was in high favour for a long



**CARVED OAK CABINET**

*Owned by Mr. Henry Fitz Waters, Salem, Mass. See pages 586-7.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

time. It was very fashionable in England during the last half of the eighteenth century. Cipriani and Angelica Kauffman both painted medallions, cameo ornaments and borders on table tops and fronts, harpsichord cases, etc., made of satin-wood or coloured in the manner of the *Vernis Martin* work. Satin-wood was very extensively used by Heppelwhite and Sheraton. At the end of our period, however, it was somewhat neglected: Amboyna-wood of various shades took its place for a time.

Snake-wood, of a deep red colour with black shades, was principally used for bordering and small work.

Hare-wood, with a light-brown ground and waves resembling satin-wood in arrangement, was also fashionable.

Botany Bay oak, Coromandel wood, acker-wood, and Canary-wood were also in request. Purple-wood was introduced after 1800. Rarer cabinet timbers were partridge, leopard and porcupine woods.

The inventories of the royal furniture during the reign of Louis XIV. mention the following varieties of wood: Grenoble walnut, Grenoble root, German wood, German root, polished walnut, mastic, English yew root, ebony, *Palissandre* (violet ebony), cedar, oak, fir, beech, blackened pear and olive. Mahogany is noticeably absent.

Ebony, a heavy, hard wood, deep black in colour, grows in tropical countries. It was known to the Greeks and Romans, and is mentioned by Ezekiel as one of the Tyrian exports. It was used in Italy in the sixteenth century for costly furniture in combination with ivory incrustations. The Dutch merchants sent it to Holland in large quantities, after they settled in Ceylon (1630), and it became very popular in Europe in the seventeenth century. We have had evidence of its presence in the Dutch homes



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

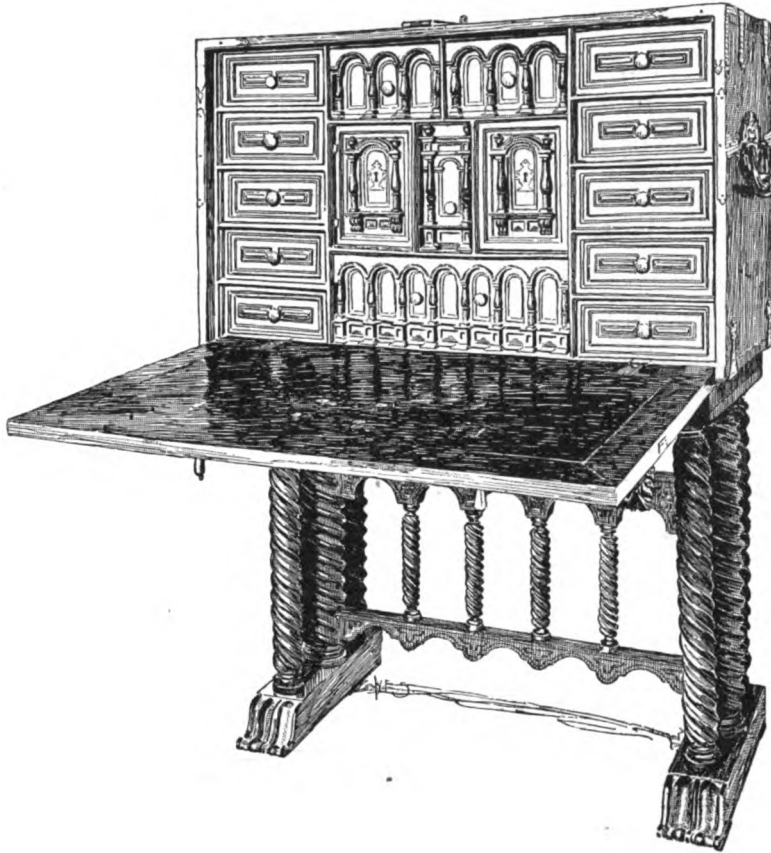
of New Amsterdam. The French obtained it from Madagascar, and from it derived the name *ébénistes* that they gave to their fine cabinet-makers. In addition to black, the most valuable kind of ebony, there are green and yellow varieties. A splendid example of ebony carving is the sofa facing page 640, belonging to Mrs. Caleb T. Smith's collection (see page 416). The back and seat are covered with crimson satin.

The table facing page 592, comes from New Orleans. It is of the Louis XIV. period and is composed of ebony, marquetry, silver and bronze. This was a present from Louis Philippe to the Marquis de Marigny, a resident of New Orleans after the fall of Louis XVI. When Louis Philippe, in exile, was in New Orleans, he was the guest of de Marigny, and in after years, when he became King of France, the Marquis de Marigny visited him and received many presents, which are now divided among his relatives.

On pages 603 and 625 are represented an ebony sofa and chairs that formed a set belonging to Stephen Girard, of Philadelphia. These are in the Sheraton style and belong to the early period of the nineteenth century. They are now preserved in Girard College, Philadelphia.

The handsome carved chair on page 587 came from Bombay and is a fine specimen of Indian work: it is interesting to compare it with the carved teak-wood stand of Chinese work on the same page. The latter has a border of the fret-work of which Chippendale was so fond. The border of the marble slab is richly inlaid with brass. Upon this table stand a few pieces of the famous "Peacock China" made only for the Emperor. His monogram is upon each piece. These came from Pekin when it was

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



OLD SPANISH CABINET

Owned by James Russell Lowell, and now by the Misses Burnett, Cambridge, Mass. See page 592.

sacked in 1860. These valuable articles are owned by Mrs. Thomas Small, Charleston, S. C.

In many reference books, the credit of introducing mahogany into cabinet-making is given to a Dr. Gibbons. The circumstantial story is as follows :

Some planks were brought to Dr. Gibbons, of London, by his brother, a West Indian sea-captain. The doctor had more mahogany than he wanted for medicine, and thought he would have some of the wood used in a house

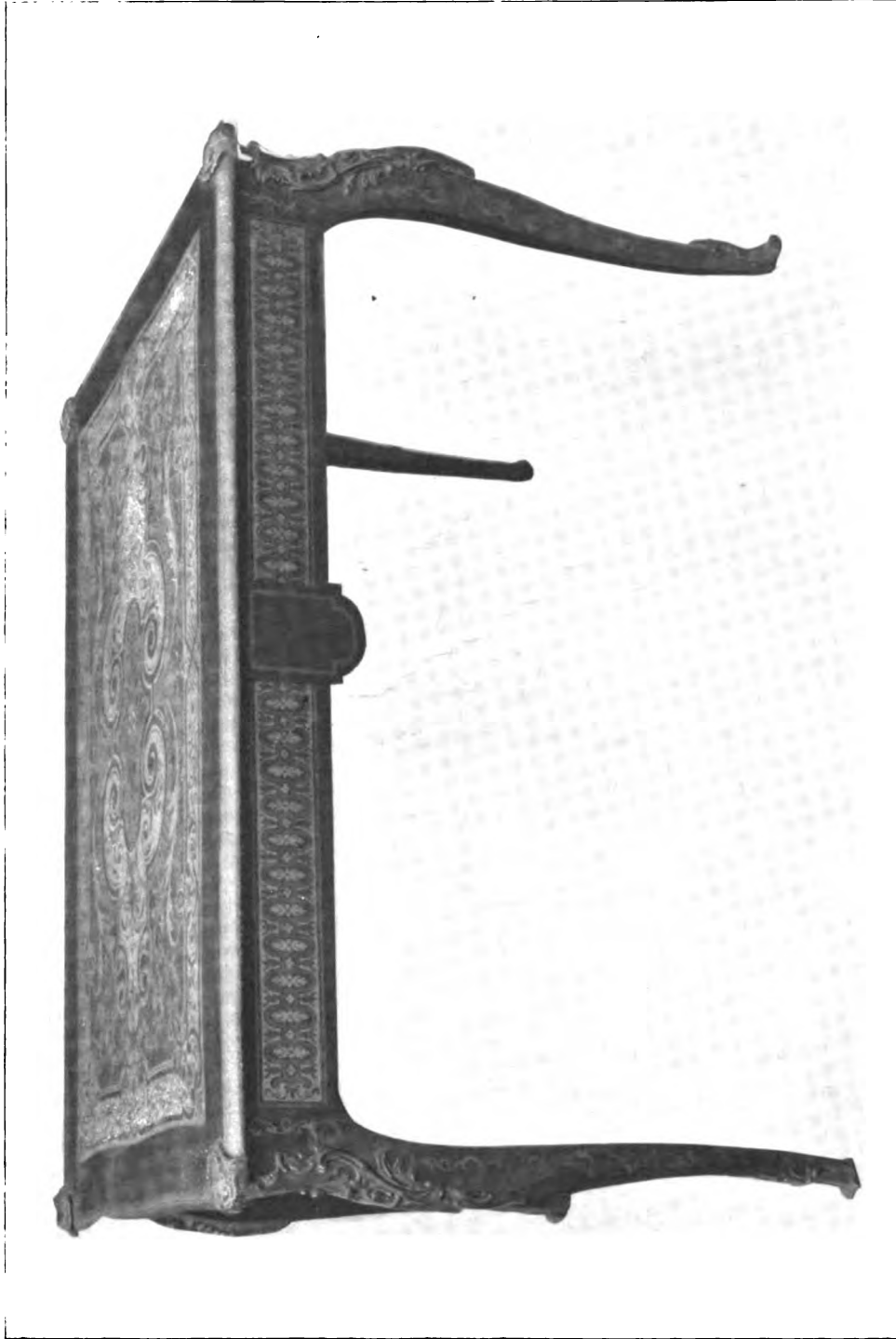
## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

that he was building in King Street, Covent Garden. The carpenters laid the wood aside as too hard. Mrs. Gibbons wanted a candle-box, and Dr. Gibbons gave the mahogany planks to a cabinet-maker named Wollaston for the purpose. The latter also complained that the wood was too hard for his tools; but Dr. Gibbons persisted, and the candle-box was soon finished. Dr. Gibbons was so pleased with it that he ordered a bureau of mahogany. This was such a triumph that many connoisseurs came to see it, and the Duchess of Buckingham asked for some of the wood to have furniture made.

That the above is a fable, that credulous editors have hitherto unquestioningly adopted from their predecessors, is evident from what has already appeared here (see pages 103, 148, 173 and 257). Furniture made of mahogany existed in New York before 1700, and in Philadelphia very little later. In London, the wood was certainly familiar to native makers long before that date. The table in the House of Commons when Cromwell turned Parliament out is said to have been of mahogany.

It is probable that the Spaniards were the first to use mahogany for furniture, and that the Dutch and English soon followed their example. The Spanish cabinet-makers were very skilful, and their wares were famous throughout Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We have seen how popular the "Spanish table" was, and we have also had instances of Spanish chairs and stools in the New York inventories. Spanish leather was always very highly prized, especially that of Cordova.

A very fine example of early Spanish workmanship is given on page 591. It is a cabinet made of Spanish chestnut on a columned frame. It was imported by Mr. James



**TABLE OF PERIOD OF LOUIS; XIV.**  
*From New Orleans. See page 590.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Russell Lowell, and now belongs to his grand-daughters, the Misses Burnett, at *Elmwood*, Cambridge, Mass.

Another piece of Spanish work from the same house, also imported by Mr. Lowell, is a carved oak chest standing on legs grooved in much the same way as the plainer chest on page 161, which also has three panels. The original iron-work adds to the interest of the present example shown on page 595.

Spanish *escritorios* of ebony, or marquetry, were as renowned in the sixteenth century as the "German cabinets." Those of Salamanca, sometimes ornamented with remarkable bronzes, were particularly esteemed, as will be shown by the following quotation from a curious little Spanish book published toward the end of the sixteenth century under the title of *Diálogos muy apazibles* (Very Pleasant Dialogues):

"How much did you pay for this *escritorio*?"

"More than it was worth: forty ducats."

"Of what wood is it?"

"The red is mahogany (*caoba*) from Havana; this, which is black, is ebony, and the white is ivory."

"It is certainly very curious, and the marquetry is beautifully made."

"Here is a buffet (*bufete*) of a better workmanship."

"Where was that made?"

"The buffet and the chairs came from Salamanca."

Another author of the same period tells us that they brought to Seville from the Indies much ebony, of which they made *escritorios* and *mesas* (tables) of the most beautiful workmanship.

Thus we have direct evidence that mahogany was used by Spanish cabinet-makers before 1600. It has been

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

suggested that, in consequence, when furniture was made of mahogany, during the next century, it came to be called by the name of those who first used that wood, and that the "Spanish" table was merely a mahogany table.

Before the close of the seventeenth century, a great deal of the new Dutch and English furniture was being made of this wood. About 1690 is the date attributed to many specimens in the museums of Great Britain. Among these, we find a cabinet with rounded top and interior nest of drawers; and a table with raised edge. A wing chair with mahogany cabriole back and front legs, dating from about 1700, also occurs. Mahogany chairs of the Queen Anne period are plentiful.

The French cabinet-makers adopted mahogany much later than those of England and Holland. Havard's *Dictionnaire d'ameublement* says that mahogany was not fashionable in France till the reign of Louis XVI., when it was adopted from the English. However, we know that the French were acquainted with this wood early in the century. Chomel (1732) says of *acajou*, "its wood is strong, somewhat light, sometimes white and sometimes reddish, not at all susceptible to worms, and in great demand for making furniture and building ships."

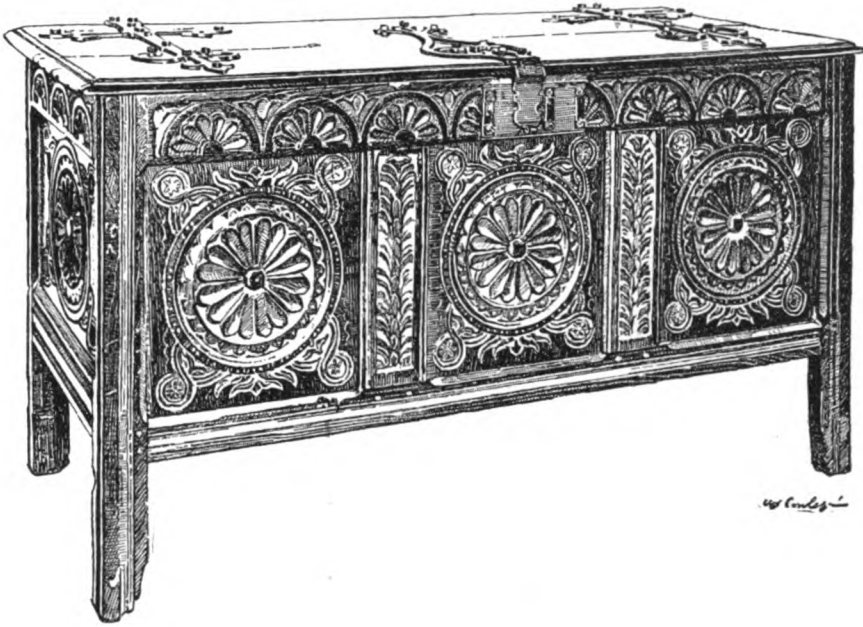
The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* (1771) says that this wood is easily worked: "The *armoires* that are made of it give a good odour to clothes and preserve them from ruin. These properties have caused some people to think that this tree is a species of cedar."

In 1731, Mark Catesby noted regarding mahogany: "The excellency of this wood for all domestic uses is now sufficiently known in England."

He also says of Red Bay: "The wood is fine-grained

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

and of excellent use for cabinets, etc. I have seen some of the best of this wood selected that has resembled



CARVED OAK CHEST

Originally owned by Mr. James Russell Lowell. See page 593.

water'd sattin; and has exceeded in beauty any other kind of wood I ever saw."

In 1741, E. Chambers describes mahogany as follows:

"There are three species. The first is commonly known under the appellation of *cedar*, in the British islands of America, where this tree grows naturally, and is one of the largest trees in the country. . . . The second sort is the mahogany, the wood of which is now well known in England. This tree is a native of the warmest parts of America, growing plentifully in the islands of Cuba, Jamaica, and Hispaniola: there are also many of them on the Bahama Islands. In Cuba and Jamaica there are trees of a very large size, so as to cut into planks of six feet in



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

breadth ; and rise to a great height, notwithstanding they are sometimes found growing on rocks, where there is scarcely any earth for their nourishment.

“ The excellence of this wood for all domestic uses is now sufficiently known ; and it is a matter of surprise that the tree should not have been taken notice of by any historian or traveller, to this time. The only author who has mentioned this tree is Mr. Catesby . . . although the wood has for many years been brought to England in great quantities.”

We have already seen that, in his book, Chippendale attached little importance to mahogany. Like the French, he preferred furniture that was carved, gilded and painted to that which depended upon the rich colours of its natural grain for its beauty. The Chippendale carved chairs, with open backs, are very often of walnut.

The Adam furniture was made chiefly, though not exclusively, of mahogany. The turned top-rails of the chairs were sometimes enriched with *ormoulu* decoration. Often, however, Adam chairs are painted and gilt.

Heppelwhite uses mahogany freely, but not exclusively.

Sheraton says : “ The kind of mahogany employed in chair-making ought to be Spanish or Cuba, of a clean, straight grain ; wood of this quality will rub bright, and keep cleaner than any Honduras wood. . . . It appears from some of the later specimens of French chairs, some of which we have been favoured with a view of, that they follow the antique taste, and introduce into their arms and legs various heads of animals ; and that mahogany is the chief wood used in their best chairs, into which they bring portions of ornamented brass. . . .

“ Drawing-room chairs are finished in white and gold,

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

or the ornaments may be japanned ; but the French finish them in mahogany with gilt mouldings.”

In 1816, the Regent's cabinet-maker gives his ideas on the appropriate use of this wood, as follows : “Mahogany, when used in houses of consequence, should be confined to the parlour and bed-chamber floors ; in furniture for these apartments, the less inlay of other woods the more chaste will be the style of work : if the wood be of a fine, compact, and bright quality, the ornaments may be carved clean in the mahogany. Where it may be requisite to make out panelling by an inlay of lines, let those lines be of brass or ebony. In drawing-rooms, boudoirs, ante-rooms, or other apartments, East and West India satin-woods, rosewood, tulip-wood, and the other varieties of woods brought from the East, may be used. With satin and light-coloured woods, the decorations may be of ebony or rosewood. With rosewood, let the decorations be *ormoulu*, and the inlay of brass. Bronzed metal, though sometimes used with satin-wood, has a cold and poor effect : it suits better on gilt work, and will answer well enough with mahogany.”

Mahogany was imported in large quantities by the American dealers. At Belcher's Wharf (New York, 1741) Nathaniel Cunningham was selling mahogany planks. In 1751, Robert Stidman, of Boston, owned 859 feet, worth £236-4-6. John Scott advertises in the *Virginia Gazette* (October 8, 1767) : “I have a quantity of good Jamaica mahogany, fit for tables and desks, which has been by me seven years, and will work it up for any gentlemen who please to employ me, for ready money, much cheaper than any other person will, as I intend to leave off the business.”

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

We also learn from the *Maryland Gazette* (1773): "Gerard Hopkins hath for sale in Gay Street, Baltimore town, mahogany boards and planks, sawed to suit every branch of cabinet and chair work, as also mahogany logs: he still continues carrying on the cabinet business in its various branches as usual."

Stearns and Waldo at the Brick Store, Washington Street, Salem, have "camwood, logwood and redwood by ton or hundred," in 1790.

Elias H. Derby, of Salem, advertises for sale in 1792, "about 4,000 feet of seasoned mahogany planks and boards of a superior quality"; and, in the same year, W. P. Bartlett, of Salem, "about 7,000 or 8,000 feet (board measure) of very excellent mahogany in logs."

New York alone could have supplied large manufactories with mahogany. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of the announcements in the papers include: 44 logs of mahogany, 1801; 35,000 feet; 30 feet Honduras; 80,000 feet prime mahogany in logs and planks, 6 tons real Campeachy, and 14 of Nicaragua wood, 1802. In 1804, 150 pieces of ebony wood came in; and, in 1806, 179 sticks of cabinet-wood for cabinet-makers.

Instances could be multiplied *ad lib.* However, sufficient evidence of the plentifulness of mahogany here has been already supplied by the stocks of native cabinet-makers. It would seem that there was a valid objection to mahogany furniture made abroad. In 1789, Wanzey writes:

"I was told the air at New York is so dry as to crack mahogany furniture brought from England, unless the wood was seasoned there first."

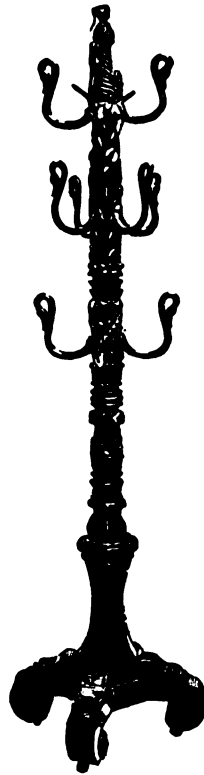
In Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures*

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

(1791), we read : “ Cabinet-wares are generally made little, if at all, inferior to those of Europe. Their extent is such as to have admitted of considerable exportation. An exemption from duty of the several kinds of wood ordinarily used in these manufactures seems to be all that is requisite by way of encouragement.”

The native woods used by the American cabinet-makers have been fully exemplified in the inventories of these craftsmen. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt notes (1795-'7) :

“ From the mill I crossed the river and the woods to dine with Dr. Warton, who resides about a mile from Wilmington, on the road to Philadelphia. The most common trees in these woods are the oak, the chestnut, and the hickory. Cedars, known in England by the name of Virginian, are likewise found in abundance ; also Scotch pine trees, Lord's pines and firs. The cedar wood is commonly used for supporters to the rails with which the fields are enclosed. The houses are also covered with planks of cedar. . . . There were eight of us at dinner ; everything which we used was the produce of his own (Dr. Warton's) farm : even the table cloth, which was fabricated of the flax grown on his own grounds, and the table, which was made of a very beautiful wood, cut on his own estate, as smooth and finely veined as mahogany. . . . The woods in the States of Delaware and Maryland produce no other trees than are found in



MAHOGANY  
PORTE-MANTEAUX

From New Orleans.  
See page 605.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Pennsylvania and Virginia. Oaks of every species abound in them, many of which are large and compact in the grain. They are used in carpenter's work, and furnish a great article of exportation. The black walnut tree, which also abounds in these woods, is much used by cabinet-makers, and makes beautiful furniture."

Ira Allen in his *History of Vermont* (1798) mentions the butternut tree as being used for wainscoting and says the white, the black, the red and the swamp oak are "all useful in civil and nautical architecture."

Timothy Dwight (1810-1811) notes that in New England the "Black Birch is used for furniture of various kinds," and says, "the wood of the Butternut is very handsome in furniture."

The mahogany desk after the Sheraton style, given on page 601, belonged originally to Mrs. Joshua Grainger Wright, of Wilmington, N. C., and is now owned by her great-grandson, S. M. Boatwright, Esq., of that city. The little drawers and pigeon-holes at the top are placed behind a tambour shutter. Another instance of tambour work occurs in a sideboard on page 498. It may be interesting to quote here Sheraton's own definition :

"Tambour tables, among cabinet-makers, are of two sorts—one for a lady or gentleman to write at; and another for the former to execute needlework by. The Writing Tambour Tables are almost out of use at present, being both insecure and liable to injury. They are called Tambour from the cylindrical forms of their tops, which are glued up in narrow strips of mahogany and laid upon canvas, which binds them together, and suffers them, at the same time, to yield to the motion their ends make in the curved groove in which they run, so that the top may be



**CHEST-UPON-CHEST**

*Originally owned by the Sparhawk family; now by the Rev. John Sparhawk Jones, Philadelphia, Pa.  
See page 605.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

brought round to the front, and pushed at pleasure to the back again, when it is required to be open. Tambour Tables are often introduced in small pieces of work when no great strength or security is required."

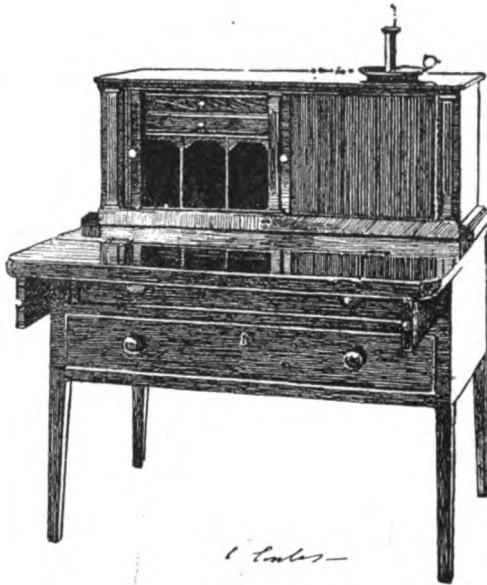
The number of native workmen was very considerable. In 1789, the Boston *Directory* contains the following names of those engaged in various branches of furniture manufacture:

Jos. Adams, Geo Acres, Thomas and Rich. Bright, Samuel Blake, Moses Bass, Jno. Bright, George Bright, Wm. Callender, Thomas Carter, John Cogswell, Wm. Dogget, Wm. Doak, Alex. Edwards, Joseph Francis, Moses

Grant, Abm. Hayward, John How, Simon Hall, Jno. Jarves, Seth Kingman, John Larkin, Martin T. Minot, Benj. Page, Ebenezer Ridgeway, John Simpkins, Samuel Stafford, Josiah Simpson, Thomas Sherburne, John Skilling, Ziphion Thayer, Isaac Vose, Ebenezer Waters.

Seven years later, we find the following additional names:

Samuel Adams, E. Breed, W. Bright, Thomas Bright, Josiah Burnstead, James Campbell, Edw. Cary, Thomas Down, Thomas Foot, John Forrest, Jesse Foster, Guild &



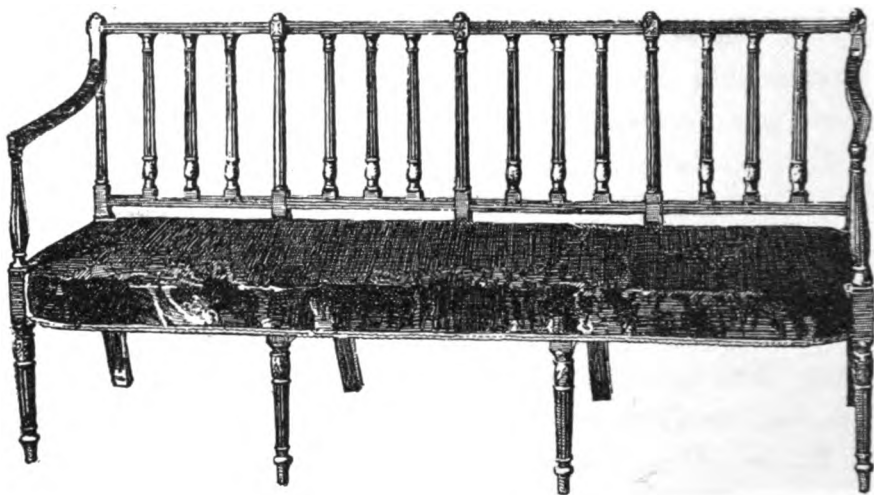
DESK

Owned by Mrs. Joshua Grainger Wright, now by her great-grandson, S. M. Boatwright, Esq., Wilmington, N. C. See page 600.



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Adams, Hall & Bisbe, Edw. Hall, Sewel Hall, John Hayward, Edmond Hay, David Hendrick, John Holland, Thomas Howe, Howe & Alexander, James Kelsa, Eb. Knowlton, Elisha Leanard, Thomas Lilhi, Thomas Lucas, Wm. M'Donald, Thomas Needham, John Orr, Orr & Sewall, Edw. Q. Richards, Wm. Seaver, John Seymour,



SOFA IN THE SHERATON STYLE

Owned by Stephen Girard ; now in Girard College, Philadelphia. See page 590.

Simeon Skilling, Samuel Skilling, Ebed. Sprague, Samuel Stone, Stone & Alexander, Vose & Todd, Moses Ward, Nath. Warner, Edward Waters, Thomas Wilkinson.

In 1796, the Baltimore cabinet-makers were :

William Brown, Alexander Brown, Walter Crook, James Davidson, Henry Davy, William Elvves, Jean Gannier, William Harris, Hicks & Law, Gerard Hopkins, William Hornby, Gualter Hornby, John James, Samuel James, Isaac Johns, Samuel Lee, Charles Linderberger, James Martin, Thomas McCabe, John Moreton, William Patteson, Warwick Price, William Sellers, Sim-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

mund & Crook, Thomas Weatherstrand, and Wilkinson & Smith.

The Windsor-chair makers were John Allvine, Jacob Cole, Caleb Hannah, Reuben League, John Miller, and John Oldham; Richard Sweeny, John Earman, and Cole & Brothers were chair-makers. Barroux & Poirrier were upholsterers; William Farris, looking-glass carver and gilder; Hand & Barber, portrait painters, gilders and glaziers; and James Smith & Co., picture-frame makers, gilders and carvers.

In 1810, the cabinet-makers were: W. Camp, Walter Crook, Henry Davy, Charles Demange, John Denmead, Edward Dorsey, Aime Dubois, William Freeman, Francis Guignard, Thomas Hines, Walter Hornby, Nathaniel Hynson, Michael Jenkins, Anthony Law, Christian Looky, James Merriken, Samuel Minskey, John Morton, John Parr, Samuel Passmore, William Patterson, William Phillips, Thomas Poe, W. Price, Edward Priestley, John Reid, William Seller, Andrew Simmons, Mr. Stevenson, Peter Stitcher, John B. Taylor, Lambert Thomas, Samuel West, Peter L. White, Joseph Wilson, and Charles Yager. The chair-makers were: George Cole (also spinning-wheels), John Coleman, William Cornthwait, Thomas Crow, Jacob Dailey, Robert Davidson, John Ehrenman, Robert Fisher, Alexander Ingram (also painter), John King, John Oldham, Thomas Oldham, Jacob Oldham and John Simonson. Edward Latham and Francis Younker were fancy chair-makers. The carvers were: John Brown, L. Churchill, William Garnous, John McCready, John McGoldrick, and George Smith (also a gilder). Ferrai & Dupin had a looking-glass and picture store. Mary Hill and Eliza Willis were upholsterers, both on Charles Street.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

In 1803, the cabinet-makers of Charleston were :

John Artman, Patk. Burk, Jas. Clark, Charles Desel, John Douglas, Jas. Duddle, Hance Fairley, Wm. Gappin, Thos. Hemmett, Henry Julian, Geo. Horlbeck, John Hutchinson, Jeremiah Hutchinson, Hutley & Wood, — Lloyd, Wm. Martin, John Marshall, Philip More, Michael Muckinfuss, Joshua Neville, Ben. R. Porter, Edw. Postell, John Prentice, Lawrence Quackinbush, Wm. Reside, Wm. Roberts, Jacob Sass, Jacob Thom, Wm. Thompson, Wm. Walker, Thomas Wallace, John Watson, Charles Watts, John Welsh, John Wilson, and John A. Woodhill.

The first New York *Directory* (1786) contains the following names:

Thomas Ash, Windsor chair-maker ; B. Barker, watch and clock-maker ; J. Brower, upholsterer ; Nicholas Carmer, cabinet-maker ; Daniel Cautant, Windsor-chair maker ; William Ellison, joiner ; Richard Green, painter, gilder, glazier and colourman ; Peter Garbrane, turner and umbrella-maker ; M. A. Gib, painter and glazier ; R. Kipp, upholsterer ; Lecock and Intle, Windsor-chair maker ; William Mooney, upholsterer ; Robert Montgomery, watch and clock maker ; William Platt, paper-hanger ; Pearsall & Embree, watch and clock-makers ; Henry Ricker, cabinet-maker ; Stephen Sands, clock and watch maker ; J. Shelly, chair-maker ; V. Telyan, chair-maker ; and Richard Wenman, upholsterer.

In 1789, the cabinet-makers were: Alexander Anderson, Samuel Bell, Thomas Burling, Robert Carter, Robert Crookshank, Walter Degrew, Alexander Dunn, Thomas Fanning, James Frame, Gifford & Scotland, William Kidson, Isaac Nichols, Lewis Nichols, H. Ricker, James Ronalds, Thomas Timpson, George Titler, Thomas

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Wallis and Charles Watts, the latter also musical instrument maker. There were nine Windsor-chair makers, and ten other chair-makers.

The upholsterers were: Battow, Brower, John Brown, John Byles, Richard Kipp, jr., Richard Lloyd, John Post, John Rickey, John Sanxay, James Van Dyck, and Richard Wenman. Isaac Steymets was an embroiderer; and Lawrence Lacey was a "mahogany sawer."

A carved mahogany *porte-manteaux*, or clothes-rack, with branches ending in swans' necks, appears on page 599. It is probably about the same date as the sofa on page 649. This piece comes from New Orleans.

The mahogany chest-upon-chest, with original brass escutcheons and key-plates, and the Heppelwhite chair facing page 600, are owned by the Rev. John Sparhawk Jones, Philadelphia. The first is a piece originally owned by the Sparhawk family (see page 334).

A china cabinet, which, like the bookcase on page 617, contains inlaid medallions of the eagle and stars, which determine its period, is represented on page 607. In this example, these ovals occur above the legs. The cabinet for china is a part of this piece of furniture resting upon the back of the table and steadied by two tapering front legs. The chair, also of mahogany, is a Chippendale pattern. These pieces belong to William B. Willson, Esq., Baltimore, Md.

The table represented on page 629 is chiefly interesting on account of the slab, which is of slate surrounded with an inlaid Chinese design. It was originally a writing-table for a merchant and was brought into this country on one of George Crowninshield's Salem vessels during the war of 1812, when privateering was not considered

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

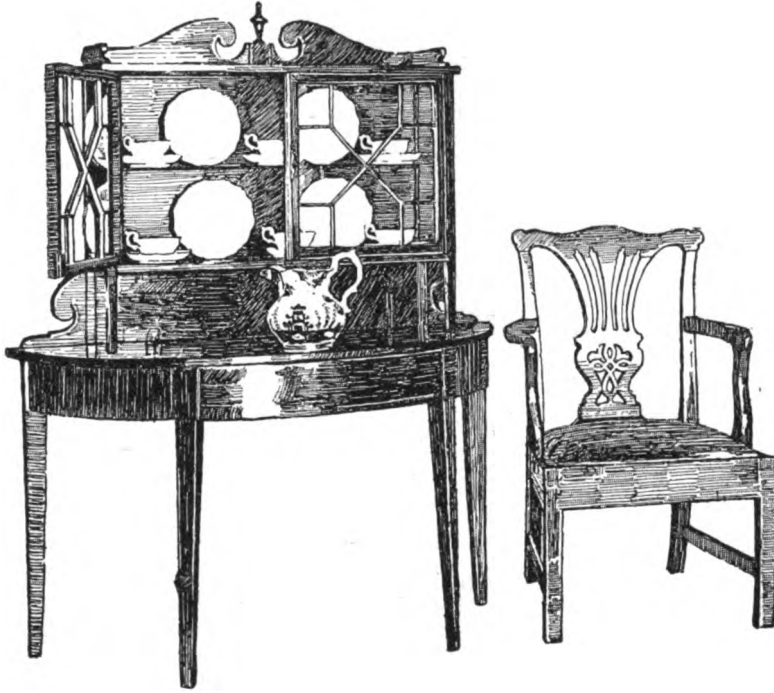
illegal in this country. It was inherited by Mrs. Edward C. Pickering, Observatory, Cambridge, Mass.

In 1818, Henry B. Fearon, who visited America to report conditions here to prospective emigrants, gives an interesting account of the state of the cabinet-makers' business in New York:

“The timber, or (as the term is here) lumber yards are not on that large and compact scale with which, in England, our friends C—— and M—— are familiar. Mahogany yards are generally separate concerns. Oak boards are this day £5-12.-6. per thousand feet. Shingles (an article used instead of tiles or slates), £1-2.-6. per thousand feet, to which is to be added a duty of fifteen per cent. Honduras mahogany is five-pence halfpenny to seventeen pence farthing the superficial foot; and St. Domingo, ninepence three farthings to seventeen pence, halfpenny. Mahogany is used for cupboards, doors, and banisters, and for all kinds of cabinet-work. Curl maple, a native and most beautiful wood, is also much approved. Veneer is in general demand, and is cut by machinery. Chests of drawers are chiefly made of St. Domingo mahogany, the inside being faced with boxwood: shaded veneer and curl maple are also used for this purpose. I would remark, that the cabinet-work executed in this city is light and elegant—superior indeed, I am inclined to believe, to English workmanship. I have seen some with cut-glass instead of brass ornaments, which had a beautiful effect.” [It is interesting to find contemporary testimony of the introduction of glass handles on furniture, as they were novel to Mr. Fearon, and he evidently was not ill-informed on the general subject of cabinet-making. This notice would seem to establish the fact that glass handles were an Ameri-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

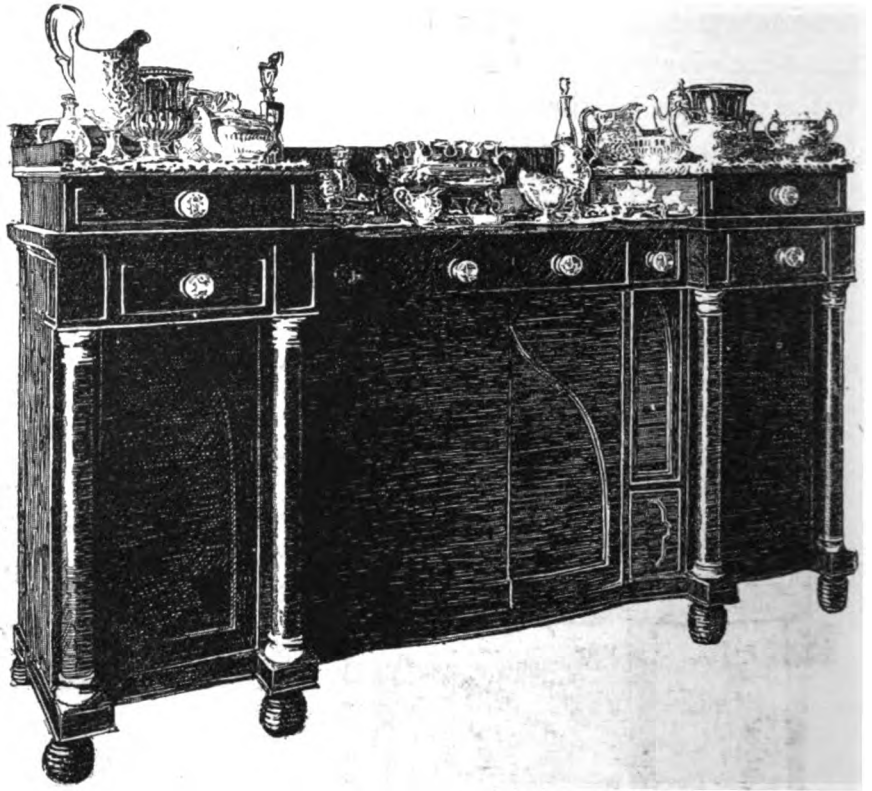
can innovation. Examples of furniture on which they occur are given on page 608, and facing page 608. The first is a large sideboard of dark mahogany belonging to Mrs. William Young, Baltimore, Md. The capitals and



CHINA CABINET AND CHAIR  
Owned by William B. Wilson, Esq., Baltimore, Md. See page 605.

bases of the columns and the feet are enriched with brass. Upon this piece of furniture stands an array of exceptional old family silver that belonged to the Gilmors of Maryland. The other, a handsome mahogany chest of drawers and dressing-table, preserved in the rooms of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society, is somewhat similar in design to the one facing page 144. This, however, is more elaborate, being decorated with brass work of very delicate chiselling. The scroll supports of

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD

Owned by Mrs. William Young, Baltimore, Md. See page 607

the mirror are gilded, but chiselled brass appears on the bases and capitals of the columns. A more beautiful *ormoulu* mount decorates the long round drawer above the two large drawers, and a finely chiselled brass crescent is placed above each of the six crystal knobs. The latter were probably later additions.]

Mr. Fearon continues: "The retail price of a three feet six-inch chest of drawers, well-finished and of good quality, is 3£. 16s. 6d.; of a three feet ten, with brass rollers, 5£. 8s. A table, three feet long, four and a half wide, 3£. 7s. 6d.; ditto with turned legs, 4£. 5s. 6d.; three and



**MAHOGANY CHEST-OF-DRAWERS AND DRESSING-TABLE**

*Owned by the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society. See pages 607-8.*



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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

a half long, five and a half wide (plain), 3£. 12s.; ditto, better finished, 4£. 10s.; ladies' work tables (very plain) 18s. Cabinet-makers' shops, of which there are several in Greenwich-street, contain a variety, but not a large stock. They are generally small concerns, apparently owned by journeymen, commenced on their own account. These shops are perfectly open, and there is seldom any person in attendance. In the centre a board is suspended with the notice 'Ring the bell.' I have conversed with several proprietors: they state their business to have been at one time good, but that there is now too much competition.

“ Chair-making here, and at the town of Newark, ten miles distant, is an extensive business. The retail price of wooden chairs is from 4s. 6d. to 9s.; of curl maple with rush seat, 11s.; of ditto with cane seat, 13s. 6d. to 1£. 2s. 6d.; of ditto, most handsomely finished, 1£. 9s.; sofas, of the several descriptions enumerated above, are the price of six chairs. I have seen in parlours of genteel houses, a neat wooden chair, which has not appeared objectionable, and of which the price could not have exceeded 9s. Cabinet-makers, timber-merchants, and builders complain—they all say that their trades have been good, but that there is now a great increase in the numbers engaged, and that the times are so altered with the merchants that all classes feel the change very sensibly. These complaints I believe to be generally well-founded; but I do not conceive the depression to be equal to that felt in England. I would also make some deduction from their supposed amount of grievances. When did you ever know a body of men admit, or even feel, that they were doing as much trade, as in their own estimation they ought? or who did not think that there were too many in their particular branches? Every

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

individual desires to be a monopolist, yet no wise legislator would ever exclude competition.

“A good cabinet-maker, who should have no more than an hundred pounds after paying the expenses of his voyage, would obtain a comfortable livelihood; as would also an active speculating carpenter or mason, under the same circumstances. A greater amount of capital would, of course, be more advantageous.”

Curl, or curled maple, of which Mr. Fearon speaks with such enthusiasm, is used with great effect as pillars upon a chest-of-drawers facing page 616, that is composed of dark mahogany. The capitals of the pillars are delicately carved. The piece belongs to Mrs. Charles S. Fairchild in New York. On the same plate is represented another chest-of-drawers, also mahogany, owned by Mrs. Henry Wysham Lanier. This is handsomely carved with pineapples and leaves. This model came into fashion about 1820. The front of the top drawer frequently let down and revealed a desk. This probably was the way in which the word *bureau* gradually came to include a chest-of-drawers even when it contained no desk. We find the following advertisements in the American papers:

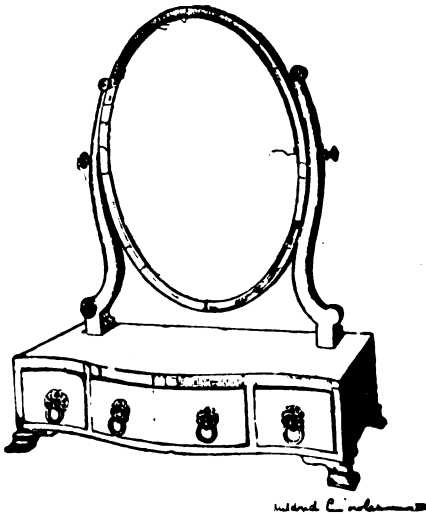
“French dressing-bureau and toilet-glass (1823), French dressing-bureaus, ladies' dressing-tables, a 'toilet bureau,' 1823; French pillar and column bureaus with toilets complete, 1824; ladies' writing secretaries and dressing-bureaus, dressing toilets with glasses, 1824; a wardrobe with centre dressing-bureau, toilets with hanging wardrobes, 1826; ladies' superb dressing-bureaus and toilets with glasses, 1826.”

The mahogany dressing-glass on page 611 belonged originally to Miss Elizabeth Van Rensselaer, and is dated

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

on the back 1786. The handles are lion's heads and mouths holding a ring, and are probably original. This is now in the Glen-Sanders house, Scotia, N. Y.

In 1820, De Witt Clinton, writing from Canandaigua, says: "All wood that is susceptible of a fine polish,



DRESSING-GLASS

Owned originally by Elizabeth Van Rensselaer and dated 1786; now in the Glen-Sanders House, Scotia, N. Y. See above.

will make good furniture, and where the texture is compact and the grain fine and concentrated, a polish can be made, an almost invariable accompaniment. I have been not a little surprised at the extravagance of the Americans in importing mahogany, satinwood, etc., for cabinet work, when they have as good, if not better, materials at home. I find cabinet-makers in full employ all over this country, and it is an occupation which deserves en-

couragement. . . . It adds greatly to our comfort to sit down at a table which reflects like a mirror—and I always judge of the housewifery of the lady of the mansion by the appearance of the sideboard and tables. But to return to my subject.

"I went yesterday to a cabinet-maker's shop, and I was surprised at the variety and elegance of the furniture, chairs and sideboards, tables, book-cases and bureaus, of walnut, maple and wild cherry, which would, with a competent polish, excel the furniture made of imported wood."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Philadelphia was at least equal, if not superior, to any other American town in the manufacture of household goods. Her stoves and Windsor chairs were especially renowned. Even in Boston, in 1787, we find a certain Ebenezer Stone advertising: "Green Windsor chairs of all kinds equal to any imported from Philadelphia. Chairs taken in and painted. N. B. English and West India goods taken in payment."

In 1785, the cabinet-makers of Philadelphia were as follows:

Joseph Allen, William Bromewell, Thomas Brown, Isaac Barnet, Thomas Bowen, Bartholomew Baker, Bryan and Nicholson, Samuel Claphamson, Adam Cressmon, John Douglass, Kearns Dowling, Joseph Dilvan, David Evans, Elfrith and Clarke, Josiah Elfrey, John Easther, William Edward, Alexander Frazer, Ford and Aitken, Christian Fox, Conrad Feerman, Jonathan Gostellow, Thomas George, Daniel Hayes, Edward Hargery, Christian Kearne, Leonard Kislar, John Kreider, Peter Lesler, Nicholas Lloyd, Benjamin Lyndall, John Meyers, William Moore, John Miller, Richard Palmer, William Rigby, George Shaw, John Savidge, Samuel Sime, John Townsend, Thomas Tuft, Daniel Trotter, Sr. and Jr., Francis Triem-ble, Andrew Vowiller, John Webb, Sr. and Jr., James Watkins, Jacob Wayne, Sr. and Jr., William Wayne, Sarah Williams, Jacob Winnemore, and Samuel Walton.

The Windsor-chair makers were: William Coxe, Ephraim Evans, Benjamin Freeman, John Litchworth, Thomas Miller, Jacob Martin, John Sprowsan, Frances Trumble, William Weddifiel, Wear and Cubbin, and John Willis. Chair-makers were George Burford, Ridding Cobly, Paul Hover, Robert Jones, Davenport Mar-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

riot, wheel and chair-maker ; William Savery, and Joseph Trotter. John Elliott was a looking-glass and medicinal merchant, and James Reynolds, a carver and gilder.

At this date, the trade was so important that a publication called *The Journeymen's Cabinet and Chair-makers' Philadelphia Book of Prices* was issued. From the second edition (1795), if we extract some of the detailed prices, we can form a very clear idea of the work that local cabinet-makers produced. It will be noticed that, although Heppelwhite's book had been out only six years, many of the descriptions apply to his designs.

### EXTRA PRICES FOR SATTIN AND OTHER WOODS

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| All work either solid, or veneerd with Sattin or Manilla-wood, to be extra in the pound from Mahogany calculated with all the work on it except bantry, . | £. s. d.<br>0-2-6 |
| Safico or Havannah, " " " .   | 0-3-0             |
| King, tulip, rose, purple, snake, zebra, Alexandria, panella, yew, maple, etc., ditto, etc., ditto, . . . . .   | 0-4-0             |
| The joints in the same to be paid the same as Mahogany, . . . . .   |                   |
| <i>All Pine work deduct in the pound, . . . .</i>   | 0-2-6             |
| Cedar Clothes Shelves or drawers to be extra from poplar or gum, each . . . .   | 0-0-6             |
| When the inside of furniture of Secretary drawers is made of Cedar, to be extra in the Shilling, . . . . .  | 0-0-2             |
| A cornice frame made to take to pieces for packing for bookcases, &c., extra, .   | 0-2-6             |
| ditto for a Library, etc., . . . . .  | 0-5-0             |
| Common or Miter Clamping when morticed to be double, the price of clamping with a groove.   |                   |

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

| PRICE OF PUTTING ON BRASS WORK  | £. s. d. |
|---|----------|
| Common casters, each . . . . .  | 0-0-2½   |
| Letting in the plate of ditto, . . . . .                                      | 0-0-1    |
| Socket, castors when the legs are tapered<br>to fit in per set, . . . . .     | 0-1-2    |
| Ditto when the legs are shoulder'd . . . . .                                  | 0-1-5    |
| Ditto on table claws, each castor, . . . . .                                  | 0-0-6½   |
| Iron or brass rollers at per pair, . . . . .                                  | 0-0-8½   |
| Fitting on a drawer lock, . . . . .   | 0-0-8½   |
| Ditto a Box lock, . . . . .   | 0-1-5    |
| Letting in the plate of ditto, . . . . .                                      | 0-0-2½   |
| Common handles, each, or rings, . . . . .                                     | 0-0-2½   |
| Letting in the nuts, each . . . . .   | 0-0-2½   |
| Putting on a patent Lock, extra from<br>Common ditto, . . . . .               | 0-2-0    |
| Lifting handles, each pair, . . . . .   | 0-1-4    |
| Socket rings, each, . . . . .   | 0-0-5½   |
| Pendant rings, each, . . . . .  | 0-0-1    |
| Letting in Escutcheon, each, . . . . .  | 0-0-2½   |
| Fixing on Center quadrants, each, . . . . .                                   | 0-3-6    |
| Letting in plates for rods in the top of<br>sideboards, each plate, . . . . . | 0-0-8    |
| A triangle on a pillar and claw table, or<br>stand, . . . . .                 | 0-0-5    |
| Ditto when four claws, . . . . .  | 0-0-6    |
| Making Holly Escutcheons, each . . . . .                                      | 0-0-5    |
| Ditto Ivory, each . . . . .   | 0-0-10   |

### BEDSTEADS

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| A Cott Bedstead, . . . . .   | 0-10-0 |
| A low popular ditto with four screws, . . . . .                    | 0-13-0 |
| If with eight screws, extra, . . . . .                             | 0-2-0  |
| If Button-wood, extra, . . . . .                                   | 0-1-6  |
| A field Bedstead of Poplar, the roof<br>sloped each way, . . . . . | 1-0-0  |
| If Button-wood, extra, . . . . .                                   | 0-2-0  |

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

|   | £. s. d. |
|---|----------|
| Plinthing each post, . . . . .  | 0-1-0    |
| Therming each post out of the solid, . . . . .                                    | 0-1-10½  |
| A plain high post poplar bedstead, the posts turned at the bottom part, . . . . . | 0-18-6   |
| If Button-wood, extra, . . . . .  | 0-2-3    |



LOW CASE OF DRAWERS

Owned by Miss Susan Pringle, Charleston, S. C. See page 622.

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| A plain Mahogany high post bedstead . . . . .            | 1-4-6 |
| A Mahogany field bedstead, sloped roof, . . . . .        | 1-7-0 |
| Plinthing each post, . . . . .                           | 0-1-6 |
| Therming each post out of the solid, . . . . .           | 0-2-3 |
| An Ogee roof for field bed, extra from sloped, . . . . . | 0-5-0 |
| A circular roof from ditto extra from sloped, . . . . .  | 0-4-0 |
| Making a sloped roof separate from bedstead, . . . . .   | 0-6-0 |



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

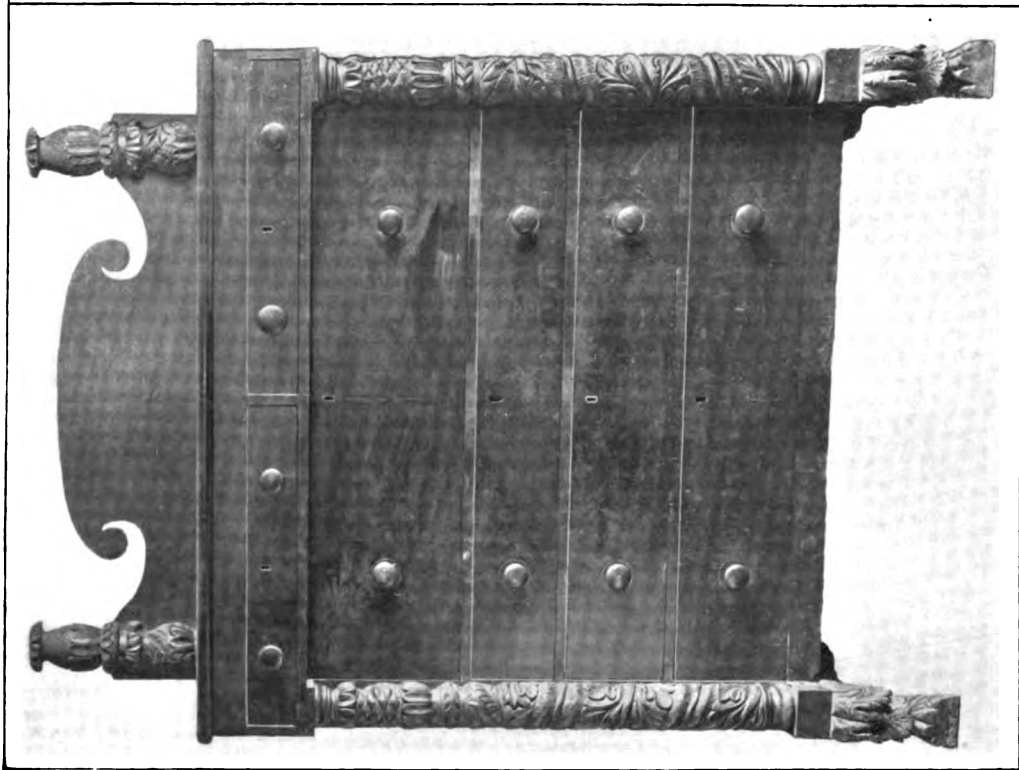
|  | £. s. d. |
|--|----------|
| Each pully in rails of high post bedstead,   | 0-0-3    |
| Each Astragal miter'd round the posts<br>above the framing, . . . . .                  | 0-1-0    |
| Cornices to be paid for according to time.   |          |
| Each inch longer than 6 feet and wider<br>than four feet between the joints, . . . . . | 0-0-2    |
| Reeding a pair of posts, 5 reeds, each post  | 0-11-0   |
| Ditto with 7 reeds in Ditto, . . . . .   | 0-14-0   |
| Ditto with nine reeds, . . . . .   | 0-17-0   |
| Ditto with eleven reeds, . . . . .   | 1-0-0    |
| Ditto with 13 reeds, . . . . .   | 1-2-0    |
| For the price of fluting posts (see table of<br>Ditto).                                |          |
| Colouring and polishing a high post bed-<br>stead, . . . . .                           | 0-4-1    |

### CHAIRS

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| A plain Bannister chair cover'd over the<br>rail, either block'd or braced, no holes<br>in the bannister, straight seat, no low<br>rails, . . . . . | 0-11-9 |
|---|--------|

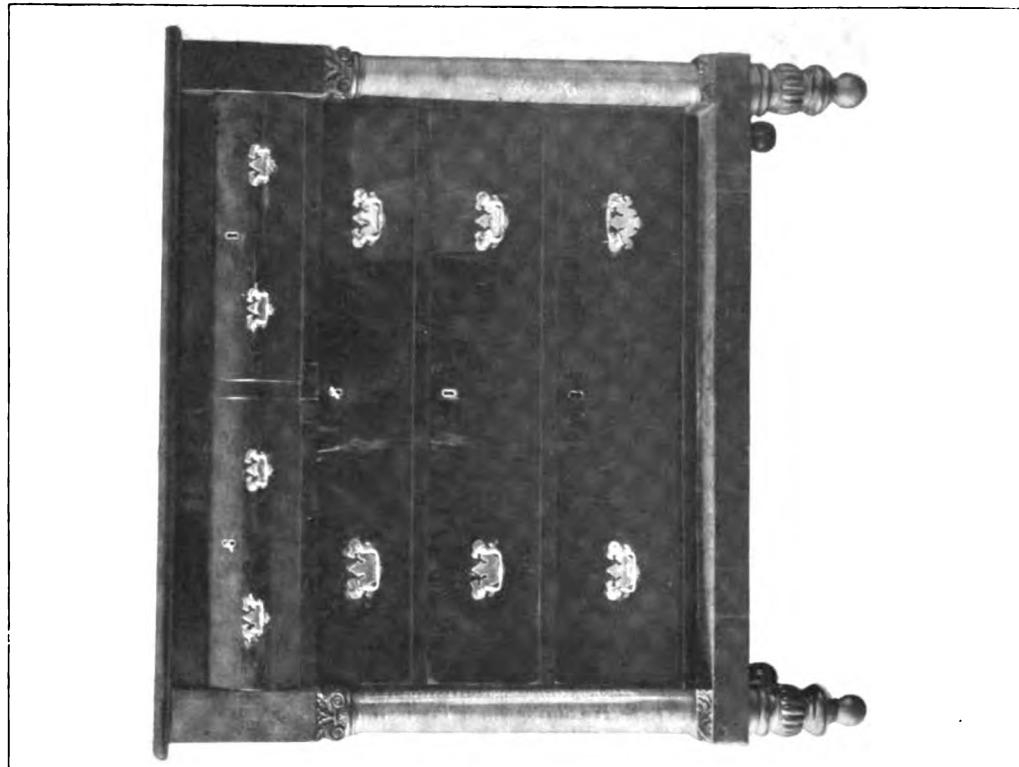
### EXTRAS

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Each hole in the bannister, . . . . .   | 0-0-2½ |
| Each ditto in the top rail, . . . . .   | 0-0-4  |
| Each hole in upright or cross splatts, . . . . .                                  | 0-0-2½ |
| Each scroll in the bannister, . . . . .   | 0-0-1  |
| Each scroll in upright or cross splatts, . . . . .                                | 0-0-1  |
| Each scroll in top rail or back foot, . . . . .                                   | 0-0-2½ |
| Each square in bannister or splatts, . . . . .                                    | 0-0-1  |
| Each ditto in the top rail or hollow, to<br>form a break, . . . . .               | 0-0-2  |
| Each nail'd block in corner of chair seats<br>extra from common blocks, . . . . . | 0-0-2  |
| A serpentine or circular front, . . . . .   | 0-0-6  |
| Sweep side-rails, . . . . .   | 0-1-0  |



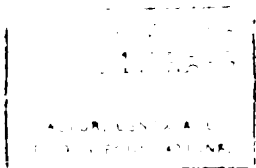
**MAHOGANY CHEST-OF-DRAWERS**

*Owned by Mrs. Henry Wyssam Lanier, New York. See page 610.*

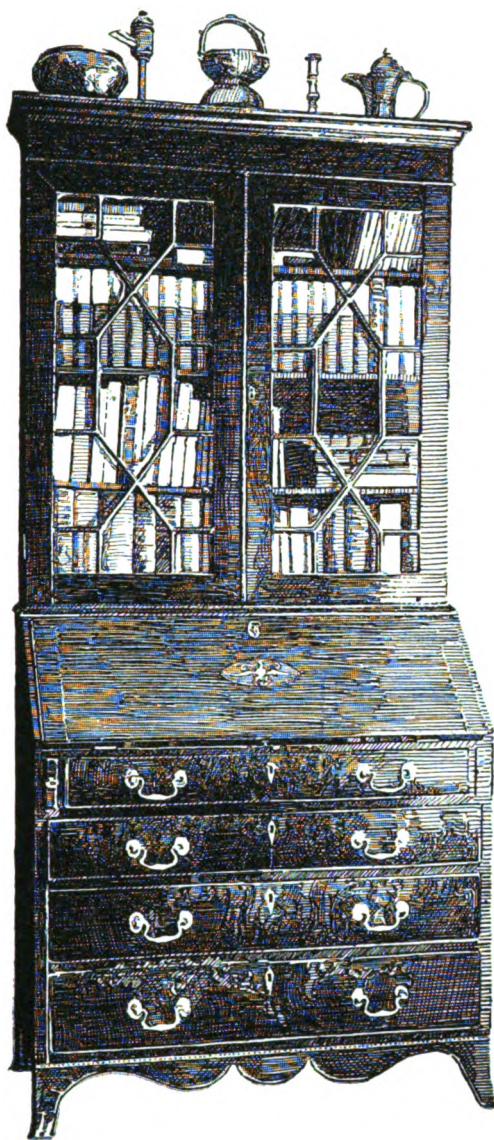


**MAHOGANY AND CURLED MAPLE  
CHEST-OF-DRAWERS**

*Owned by Mrs. Charles S. Fairchild, New York. See page 610.*



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS



BOOKCASE AND SECRETARY

Owned by R. T. H. Halsey, Esq., New York. See page 623.

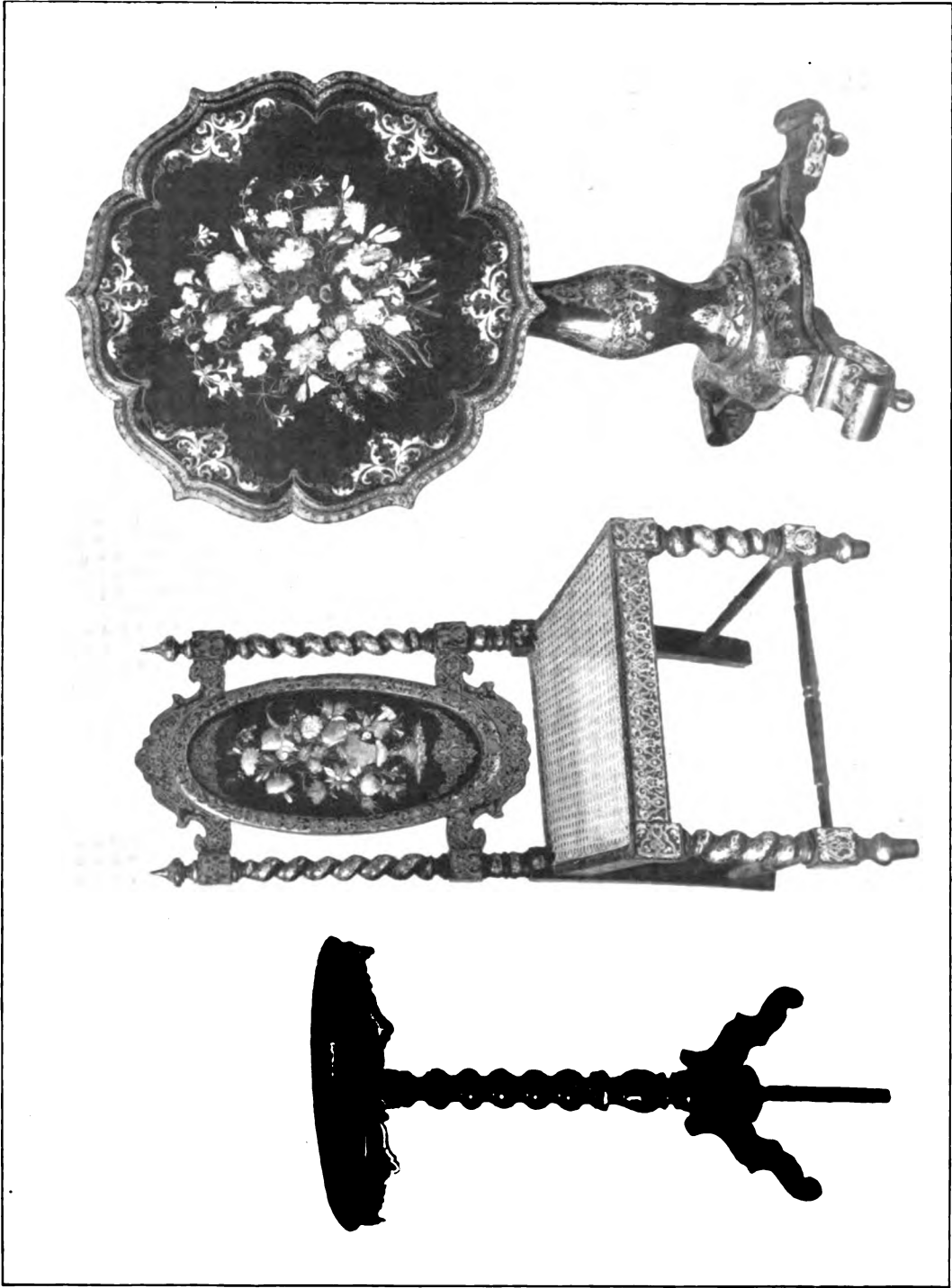
|  | £. s. d. |
|--|----------|
| A loose seat straight, . . . . .           | 0-3-0    |
| Ditto with circular front, . . . . .       | 0-4-0    |
| Ditto with serpentine, . . . . .           | 0-5-0    |
| If with sweep side rails, extra, . . . . . | 0-1-3    |

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

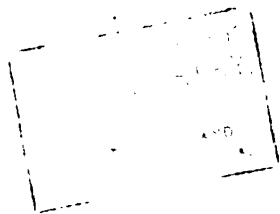
|  | £. s. d.        |
|--|-----------------|
| Low rails to Ditto, . . . . .  | 0-3-9           |
| If no back rail deduct, . . . . .  | 0-0-9           |
| Veneering the back side of each rail, . . . . .  | 0-0-3           |
| Ditto the top edges of each, . . . . .   | 0-0-2½          |
| Each slip between the back feet with a<br>bead on each side, . . . . .                                   | 0-0-2½          |
| Ditto a toad back moulding, . . . . .  | 0-0-3½          |
| Tonguing each stay rail together, in chairs,<br>If dovetailed, . . . . .                                 | 0-0-4<br>0-1-0  |
| For tapering, plinthing, therming, mould-<br>ing, or panneling the feet (see tables of<br>Ditto).        |                 |
| Sawing out back feet of 1½ stuff, each cut   | 0-0-2½          |
| Ditto of 2 inches, each Ditto, . . . . .   | 0-0-3           |
| Ditto " 2½ inches, each Ditto, . . . . .   | 0-0-6½          |
| " " 3 inches, " " . . . . .  | 0-0-4           |
| " front feet, each cut, . . . . .  | 0-0-1           |
| Sawing seat serpentine front, rails, each<br>cut, . . . . .  | 0-0-3           |
| Ditto a circular front or sweep side rails,<br>each cut, . . . . .                                       | 0-0-2½          |
| Ditto a circular front with hollow corners,<br>Mortising the back feet through, each<br>chair, . . . . . | 0-0-3½<br>0-0-6 |
| A splatt back chair with three cross splatts,<br>made for stuffing over the rail, . . . . .              |                 |
| Straight seat, no low rails, . . . . .   | 0-13-0          |
| Sawing out each top rail or splatt, . . . . .  | 0-0-2½          |

### A SPLATT BACK CHAIR

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Honeysuckle pattern, made for stuffing<br>over the rail, straight seats, no low rails,   | 0-14-6 |
| A Heart back stay rail Chair, with a ban-<br>nister and two upright splatts, straight<br>seat, made for stuffing over the rail, no<br>low rails, . . . . . | 0-15-8 |



CHAIR AND TWO TABLES  
*Owned by the Corning family; now in the rooms of the Albany Institute and Historical and Art Society. See page 581.*



# THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

## A STAY RAIL CHAIR

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| With serpentine top rail and five upright splatts, straight seat made for stuffing over the rail, no low rails, . . . . . | £. s. d.<br>0-16-0 |
| Rounding the back side of each splatt, . . . . .  | 0-0-2              |
| With three upright splatts, straight seat, made for stuffing over the rails, no low rails, . . . . .                      | 0-16-6             |

## A VASE BACK STAY RAIL CHAIR

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| With serpentine top and three upright splatts, or bannister in Ditto, straight seat made for stuffing over the rails, . . . . . | 0-15-6 |
|---|--------|

## A SQUARE BACK CHAIR

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| With a hollow cornered top rail and straight seat, three upright splatts, a bannister in ditto made for stuffing over the rail, . . . . . | 0-15-0 |
|---|--------|

## A SQUARE BACK CHAIR

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| With straight top and stay rail, three upright splatts, straight seat, made for stuffing over the rail, . . . . .                                    | 0-14-0 |
| If the top and stay rail are swepted in the front, extra, . . . . .  | 0-0-4  |
| If the above is made with a long vase splatt in the middle, and an arch in the top rail to be extended between two outside splatts, extra, . . . . . | 0-0-9  |
| Diminishing each back foot with a hollow front, the seat rail up extra from plain taper, . . . . .   | 0-0-2  |

## ELBOWS FOR CHAIRS

|                                   |        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| The old scrolled elbow, . . . . . | 0-10-6 |
| Plain twisted ditto, . . . . .    | 0-11-6 |
| Plain elbows, . . . . .           | 0-9-6  |
| Moulding the elbows, . . . . .    | 0-3-0  |



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| French elbows for straight side rail, the                        | £. s. d. |
| elbows mortised on stump of front foot,                          | 0-13-6   |
| If to sweep side rails extra, . . . . .                          | 0-3-0    |
| A close stool in an elbow chair, . . . . .                       | 0-7-6    |
| For extra depth of framing and scrolling<br>the rails, . . . . . | 0-3-0    |

### EASY CHAIRS

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| An easy chair frame, plain feet, no low<br>rails, . . . . . | 1-5-0 |
| A Commode front, . . . . .                                  | 0-1-0 |
| A Close stool in ditto, . . . . .                           | 0-7-6 |
| A fram'd seat extra, . . . . .                              | 0-2-0 |
| Plowing and tonguing ends of loose seat,                    | 0-0-9 |
| Square clamping, Ditto, . . . . .                           | 0-1-5 |
| Low rails to ditto, . . . . .                               | 0-4-0 |

### SOFAS AND EXTRAS

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| A plain sofa with six feet, no low rails, six<br>feet long, with fast back, . . . . . | 1-8-0  |
| Each inch longer, . . . . .   | 0-0-2½ |
| A sweep front rail, . . . . .   | 0-2-0  |
| A sweep top rail, . . . . .   | 0-0-9  |

### A SQUARE BACK MAHOGANY SOFA

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Five feet long, with six feet to ditto, no<br>low rails, straight seat, . . . . .                        | 1-10-0 |
| A sweep front rail with hollow corners, . . . . .  | 0-3-6  |
| If with a hollow corner'd top rail, . . . . .  | 0-3-9  |
| An arch in the top rail to answer the<br>arches in square back chairs, extra from<br>straight, . . . . . | 0-2-6  |
| Plain mahogany elbow to ditto, . . . . .   | 0-11-6 |
| Each inch longer than five feet, . . . . .   | 0-0-2½ |

### CABRIOLE SOFA

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| A Cabriole sofa five feet long with plain<br>feet, no low rails, . . . . . | 2-1-0 |
|--|-------|

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

|  | £. s. d. |
|--|----------|
| Each inch longer, . . . . .  | 0-0-4    |
| Tapering, plinthing, therming, moulding,<br>etc., see plain bannister chair. |          |
| Planting mahogany on top edge of back,                                       | 0-8-3    |



MAHOGANY CHEST OF DRAWERS  
In the house of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem. See page 623.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Running the mouldings on ditto, . . . . .                                   | 0-9-0  |
| A crossband and astragal round front and<br>ends, . . . . .                 | 0-9-3  |
| An astragal above the band extra, . . . . .                                 | 0-3-9  |
| Low rails to ditto, . . . . .   | 0-1-10 |
| Polishing all backs of chairs with wax to<br>be paid for according to time. |        |

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

The mahogany chair facing this page has a back of graceful design richly carved, and belongs to the early Chippendale school (see pages 148 and 447), but the legs and feet are peculiar, ending in the dog's claw, above which the hair is indicated. The line of the leg is quite different to the cabriole spring, and the arms are also less bowed than in the ordinary Anglo-Dutch model. This criticism also applies to the model of the cellaret, or wine-cooler at its side. This is also of mahogany bound with three heavy brass bands. The carving of the legs and the base as well as the large daisy on the top of the cellaret is carefully executed. These pieces belong to Mrs. Andrew Symonds, Charleston, S. C. So much has been said regarding the case of drawers so often erroneously called "high-boy" and "low-boy" (see page 342), that a description of the one on page 615 belonging to Miss Susan Pringle, is unnecessary. We may call attention to the fact that this has but two drawers and simple early hoof feet which generally characterize these specimens. The ring-handles of brass belong to a later period.

Bookcases before the Revolution were generally large. In the Charleston *Morning Post*, July 27, 1786, we learn: "To be sold by public auction. . . . A very complete bookcase, 8 feet wide and 9 feet high; the upper part in three pieces, kept together by a beautiful cornice. For taste, elegance and workmanship, this piece is not exceeded by any in the State."

The above mentioned bookcase was doubtless similar to the one that appears on page 150, the dimensions of which are 8 ft., 4 in. long; 11 ft. high; 2 ft., 4 in. deep; and the upper portion, 7 ft. 9 in. high.

Christian, cabinet-maker, 35 Wall Street, has, in 1814,



**CARVED MAHOGANY CHAIR AND CELLARET**  
*Owned by Mrs. Andrew Simonds, Charleston, S. C. See page 622.*

ALLEN, LUNCE AND  
CO. A. S.  
111 N. FIFTH ST. ST. LOUIS, MO.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

“a superior library case, 8 feet long, by 9 feet, 6 inches high.”

A bookcase—the panes of which are in the style of Chippendale and Heppelwhite—and secretary is represented on page 617. This belongs to R. T. H. Halsey, Esq., of New York. It is of mahogany with simple brass handles. The chief interest of this piece lies in the small inlaid oval in the centre of the flap, representing an eagle surrounded by thirteen stars, which alone shows that it dates after the Revolution and is of native manufacture. This ornament frequently occurs on the legs of card-tables, etc., made after the Federal Government was established.

We have spoken of the change of style from the carved oak period and how the *bombé* shapes became popular (see pages 195, 256, and 405). The picture on page 621 of a mahogany chest-of-drawers in the home of Mr. Charles R. Waters, Salem, Mass., gives an excellent idea of the swelling line that is known as *bombé* (*bomber*; to bulge, to jut out). This piece is decorated with handsome brass escutcheons and key-plates, stands on short cabriole legs, with the eagle's claw holding the ball and has a carved shell at its base.

In judging old furniture, the buyer has to be on his guard against many tricks of the trade. Most of these are directed towards giving an appearance of antiquity to the pieces. The novice should be particularly suspicious of carved oak. Walnut juice is frequently used by dealers to stain oak a deep tone; but oak of moderate age is brown and not black, and much of the blackness, which is only the result of dirt and smoke, can be washed off. New oak can also be darkened by a solution of old iron in hot

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

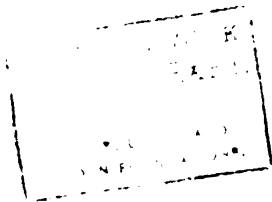
vinegar, after which it is oiled and polished. Worm holes in oak, which contribute to the "antique" appearance, are also "faked." Nitric acid and tiny holes bored with an auger make an excellent imitation of the work of ants and worms. There are many workmen in Europe employed solely in boring such holes in counterfeit "antiques," and Parisian dealers have also been accused of riddling the wood with fine bird-shot and of utilizing worms to do the work. It is also said that furniture which has to be several centuries old is beaten with cudgels and mallets. Sometimes, too, carved oak is roughly coated with white paint, which is dried in the sun and washed with potash, which removes the paint in patches, revealing tempting glimpses of ornate carving. As old carved panels were frequently painted over during the last two centuries, the novice is ready to believe the dealer's tale of a valuable "find." The plainer an oak piece is, the more likely it is to be genuine, for comparatively little furniture of two hundred years ago was richly decorated: sumptuous articles were reserved for the wealthy class. Therefore, the amateur, when buying carved oak, must examine carefully the designs and beware of purchasing, for example, a "German or Flemish piece of the fourteenth century" with Renaissance ornaments; he may well be suspicious of any sixteenth or seventeenth century carving representing Biblical subjects in correct Oriental costume: the figures would appear in such contemporary clothing as the carver was familiar with. It is very important that the amateur collector should study the forms and devices of ornamentation peculiar to different periods and to individual designers. It is only by such acquired knowledge that he will be able to accord a proper or ap-



**BOOKCASE AND DESK**

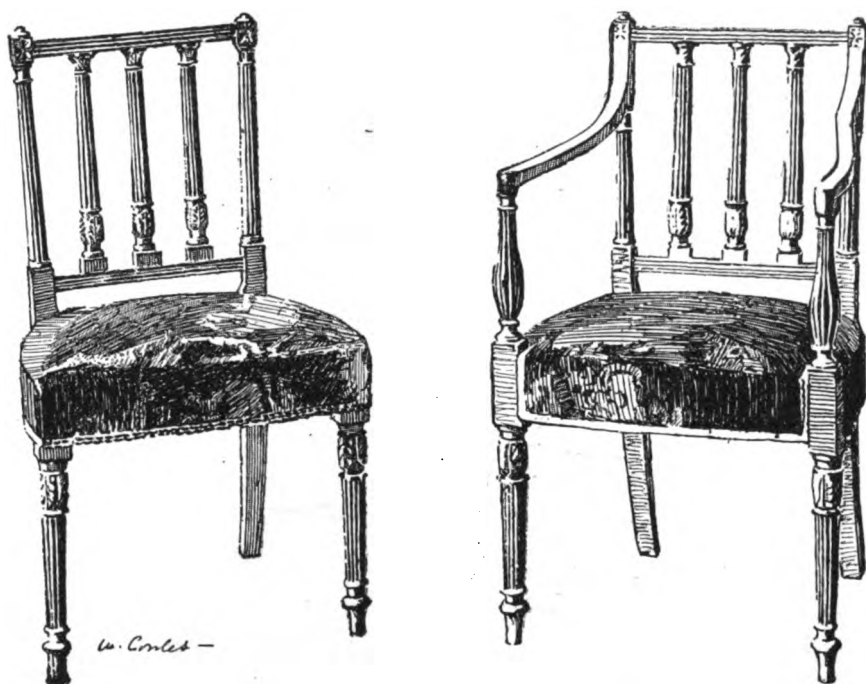
*Owned by Mr. Robert A. Boit, Boston, Mass. See page 582.*





## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

proximate date to any article, while his common sense will afford him protection against unscrupulous dealers' legends. On pages 18-20 a general description of the ornaments and construction of the Elizabethan and Jacobean furni-



CHAIRS IN THE SHERATON STYLE

Owned by Stephen Girard; now in Girard College, Philadelphia. See page 590.

ture has been given, and the pictures given in Parts I. and III. of carved oak, and furniture contemporary with it, will enable the amateur to classify any similar pieces that he may discover. He will also be able to ascertain the proper use of cane, rush, leather and damask for the seats and backs of chairs of this period. He will also note examples of transitional styles (see chairs on pages 4, 65, 69, 101, 184, 186 and 240) that lead to the Anglo-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Dutch (see chairs on page 277) and the so-called "Chippendale" furniture, referred to on pp. 68, 194, 256 and 276-8, and be enabled to follow the history of that furniture in which the curve forms the outline until the straight lines dominate under Louis XVI. and Sheraton. He will also appreciate that the abused word "Colonial" cannot be applied to any furniture dating after 1776; and that no Heppelwhite and Sheraton models can be called by that name.

If the student desires to attain sufficient knowledge to distinguish infallibly the work of the various great makers, a close study of their own plates is necessary first of all. Chairs or sofas with the characteristic backs of one maker and legs of another; Chippendale carving with Empire ornaments; and Louis Quatorze tables in mahogany will soon have no charms for him. One sometimes sees a somewhat elaborately carved or inlaid mahogany buffet for sale and designated a "Chippendale" sideboard! Anyone acquainted with Chippendale's book knows that his sideboard is merely a table. The intricacy of the design, and the elaborate carving, inlaid or applied work is often a great safeguard against counterfeiting. The skill and time required to reproduce even an ornate Chippendale chair acts as a deterrent. The copies on the market have the most meagre amount of hand carving and the evidences of machine work are discernible. The dimensions given by the original designers are a test that may profitably be applied. Some of these are given on pages 638, 639, 642, 644 and 647.

It is not known that any of the English makers signed the work produced in their own shops. Many of the French *ébénistes* did so: on different pieces in South Ken-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

sington are stamped the names of Riesener, David, Pafret, Carlin, Garnier, Oeben, Pioniez, Denizot, Richter, Joseph, Deloose, Jansen and Cosson. Sometimes the prefix M. E. (*menuisier ébéniste*) occurs. However, even if a piece bore the stamp of T. Chippendale, its genuineness would not thereby be assured, for signatures may be forged as carved dates often are on oak chests.

It must be remembered that Chippendale, Adam, Heppelwhite and Sheraton are almost as much generic terms as Boule. Adam never made any furniture, and the only authentic pieces of "Adam" are those specially designed for particular rooms. The style, however, was copied by many contemporaries, and it is their productions that may be procured and are still highly prized. The characteristics of Adam furniture and ornaments have been described on pages 465-6. Chippendale has been fully discussed (see pages 441-450). The student must bear in mind that the books of designs brought out by Chippendale, Heppelwhite, Sheraton and others were avowedly intended for the use of the trade, as well as for the delectation of their own patrons. The lists of subscribers to these books include all the principal cabinet-makers of Great Britain, all of whom in consequence would supply their customers with whatever was in demand. Thus Chippendale chairs were made by the thousand, and the only point on which the collector can hope to be certain is whether a given chair is of the Chippendale period. The same applies to Heppelwhite and Sheraton. The latter made scarcely any furniture after the publication of his first book in 1793 (see page 477), but the 140 cabinet-makers who subscribed to that publication undoubtedly made an enormous amount in the dozen years or so before the Empire finally supplanted

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Sheraton. Heppelwhite is usually credited with the heart-back and shield-back chairs, but care must be taken in distinguishing his patterns from one given by Sheraton. The latter's work may often be recognized by an expert in carpentry, for he generally gives most minute directions for construction. Typical instances are as follows :

“As high as the stuffing of the seat a rabbet should be left on the stump to stuff against; which is easily done, as the stump is made smaller above the rail. The cushions on the arms are formed by cutting a rabbet in the arm, or leaving the wood a little above the surface. Some, however, bring the rabbet square down at each end, covering the wood entirely, except a fillet, which is left at the bottom and continues round the cushion.”

“Bed-pillars. The pateras which cover the screw heads are on loose panels let into the pillars, and which settle down into a groove at the bottom, by which means they are kept in their place and easily taken out.”

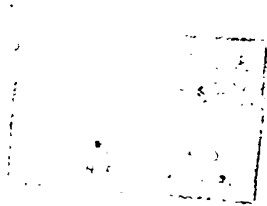
Other instances of his detailed instructions occur on pages 478-484 and 650-652.

The lists of materials given on pages 631-637, with the dates and also the cabinet-makers' own instructions, will be of use to the amateur in covering his treasures correctly. Many of the chairs represented show also the proper distribution of brass nails.

We can hardly understand at this day the enormous importance attached to draperies and the graceful festoon. Sheraton introduces it everywhere, especially in his later years; and the Empire furniture, particularly the bed, is dependent upon the tent-like folds and graceful curtains of contrasted colours. The upholsterers vied with each other in producing effects, as the plates in the fashion magazines



QUEEN ANNE CHAIRS  
*From an English Loan Collection. See page 634.*



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

of the day plainly show, yet we find a contemporary critic uttering the following complaint :

“ In no part of his profession is the upholsterer more deficient than in the arrangement and in the forms of his



CHINESE TABLE WITH SLATE TOP

Owned by Mrs. Edward C. Pickering, Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. See page 605.

draperies, which arises from the want of an attentive observation of what is easy and elegant ; from this deficiency of knowledge we often see silk and calico tortured into every other form than agreeable natural drapery. The mystery and difficulty of cutting-out would vanish did the artist but apply his mind with resolution to conquer his established prejudices : to the workman very little knowledge is usually required beyond cutting out what is usually



## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

called a festoon, the arrangement, whether for continued drapery or for a single window, forming the principal difficulty; one festoon well and properly cut out will answer for the whole: this difficulty once overcome, a little ingenuity will readily accomplish whatever else may be required.

“I must here observe the utter impossibility of forming tasteful and well flowing draperies of the stiffened materials at present in general use: it is nearly as practicable to throw buckram into easy and graceful drapery as the modern high glazed stiffened calicoes; the stiffening must be dispensed with, or the utmost effort of the artist will be in vain. The pleasantest materials are silk and fine cloth.

“For eating-rooms and libraries, a material of more substance is requisite than for rooms of a lighter cast; and for such purposes, superfine cloth, or cassimere, will ever be the best; the colours, as fancy or taste may direct; yet scarlet and crimson will ever hold the preference.”

Another writer complains in 1816 as follows:

“Perhaps no furniture is more decorative and graceful than that of which draperies form a considerable part; the easy disposition of the folds of curtains and other hangings, the sweep of the lines composing their forms, and the harmonious combinations of their colours, produced a charm that brought them into high repute, but eventually occasioned their use in so liberal a degree as in many instances to have clothed up the ornamented walls, and in others they have been substituted entirely for their more genuine decorations, by which the rooms obtained the air of a mercer’s or a draper’s shop in full display of its merchandize, rather than the well imagined and correctly designed

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

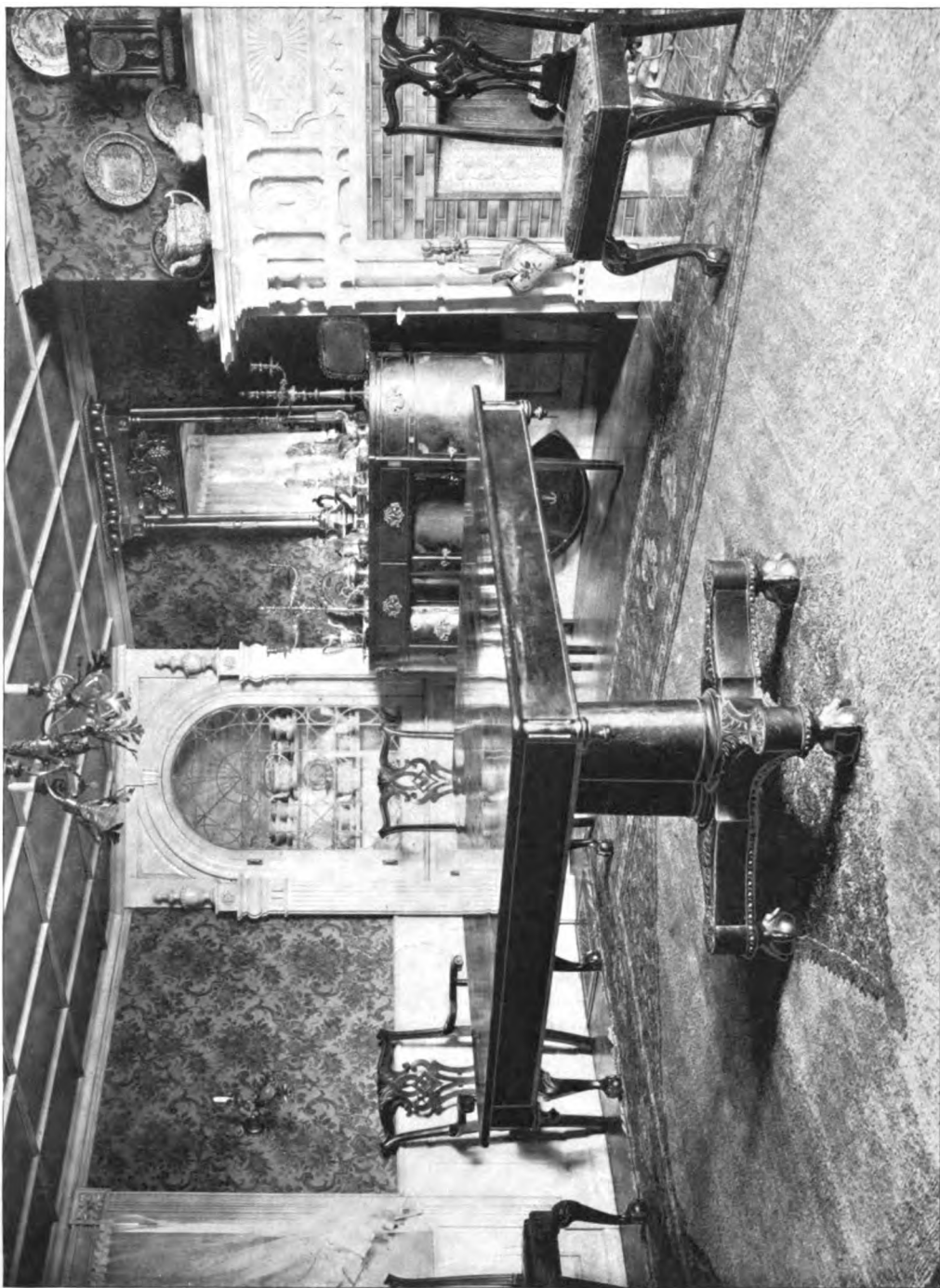
apartment of a British edifice: indeed, to so great an excess was this system of ornamental finishing by draperies carried, that it became the usual observation of a celebrated amateur in this way, that he would be quite satisfied if a well proportioned barn was provided, and would in a week convert it, by such means, into a drawing-room of the first style and fashion. So long as novelty favoured the application, this redundance was tolerated; but time has brought the uses of these draperies to their proper office of conforming to the original design, consisting of those architectural combinations that possess a far greater beauty, dignity and variety than draperies are capable of affording."

The materials used for upholstering in the seventeenth century were camak, or camoca, darnix, or dornix, or darneck, perpetuana, kitterminster, or kidderminster, serge, drugget, dimity, calico, camlet, calimanco or callimanco, plush, mohair, paduasoy, horsehair, chaney, or cheney, or china, Turkey-work, green cloth, crimson, worsted, red cloth, red damask, leather, yellow damask, shalloon, say, watchet, serge, linsey-woolsey, searsucker, blue and white cotton, fustian, silk muslin, chintz, Indian calico, tabby, taffety, sarcenet, damask and rateen. Camak has been defined on page 14, and darnix, perpetuana, kidderminster, serge, drugget, dimity and calico on page 17. In addition to calico, there was painted calico, known as early as 1663, for Pepys notes in his *Diary*: "Bought my wife a chint, that is a painted Indian calico, for to line her new study." It is strange that Chambers does not mention calico in the early editions of his encyclopædia: but in the supplement to that of 1753 we find "callicoes are of divers kinds; plain, printed, painted, stain'd, dyed, chints, muslins and the like."

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Camblet was "a stuff sometimes of wool, sometimes silk, and sometimes hair; waved camblets are those whereon waves are impressed as on tabbies. Tabby, a kind of course taffety watered. Taffety, or taffetas, a fine smooth silken stuff. The taffetas Noirs of Lyons are Alamode and Lutestring. The chief consumption of Taffeties is in Summer-dresses for women, in linings, scarfs, coifs, window-curtains &c."

Calimanco was a glazed linen stuff; plush, a coarse kind of silk velvet with a thick nap; mohair, a fabric composed of the hair of the Angora goat, mixed with silk of cotton warps; paduasoy, a smooth strong silk, and also a kind of worsted; hair-cloth, the same as horsehair; chaney or cheney, worsted, woollen, or silk stuff from China; for Turkey-work see facing page 198; shalloon, a woollen stuff first made in Chalons; say, a woollen cloth; linsey-woolsey, a coarse woollen stuff; watchet, pale blue; sear-sucker, a thin striped grey-and-white ridged material; sarcenet, a thin silk; damask, a rich stuff made first in Damascus, and made in "such manners as that which is not satin on one side is on the other"; serge, a woollen quilted stuff manufactured on a loom with four treadles; rateen, a thick woollen stuff quilled. "There are some rateens dressed and prepared like cloths; others left simply in the hair; and others where the hair or nap is frized. Rateens are chiefly manufactured in France, Holland and Italy; and are mostly used in linings." Frize, a sort of coarse rateen; drugget (see page 17). There is no need for us to enumerate the ways in which the above materials are used since their frequent occurrence in the early chapters of this book has made the reader thoroughly acquainted with them.



## DINING-ROOM

*In the home of Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn. See page 655.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY  
540 EAST 57TH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

In England, Queen Mary's fondness for East Indian goods brought the products of the Indian looms into fashion, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century the following varieties were well-known :

Allejars, Atlases, Addatties, Allibannies, Aubrowahs, Bafraes, Brawles, Bejurapauts, Betellees, Bulchauls, Byrapants, Betelles, Bafts, Baguzzees, Chints, Chelloes, Coopees, Callowaypoose, Cuttannees, China cherrys, Cherriderrys, Cushlahs, Coffees, Cuttanees, Carradarries, Cheaconines, Chucklaes, Chowtars, Culgees, Dorcas, Deribands, Doodamies, Doorguzzees, Elatches, Emerties, Gorgorans, Guinea stuffs, Gurrahs, Goaconcheleras, Gurracs, Gelongs, Gingham, Humadees, Humhums, Izzarees, Jamdannies, Jamwars, Luckhoories, Moorees, Mulmuls, Mamoodies, Mahmudhiattees, Mickbannies, Negane-pants, Nillaes, Niccannees, Peniascoes, Pallampores, Potaes, Pelongs, Palampores, Paunches, Ponabaguzzees, Rehings, Romalls, Shalbafts, Seersuckers, Sallampores, Sovaguzzees, Soofeys, Seerbettees, Sannoos, Succatums, Sooseys, Seerbands, Tainsooks, Terrindams, Tapsiels, Tepoys, Tanjeebs.

In the first decade of the century the silken goods were as follows : "Silver Tishea, Pudsway, Shaggs, Tabbeys, Mowhairs, Grazets, Brochés, Flowered Damasks, Flowered Lutestrings, ditto striped and plain, Sarsnets, Italian Mantuas, Silk Plushes, Farrendines, Shagreen, Poplins, Silk Crapes and Durants." (Durant was a variety of Tammy.)

The woollen fabrics consisted of Hair and Woollen Camlets, Hair Plushes, Spanish and English Druggets, Serge Denims, Calamancoes, Russells (flowered and damask), Serges, Shalloons, Tammeys, Ratteens and Salapeens.

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Alamode, a thin, glossy, black silk, is mentioned in 1676 in company with "Taffaties, Sarsenets and Lutes."

Two beautiful chairs of the Queen Anne period face page 628. The first is a "wing chair," with square high back, wide side head-rests and high arms curving outwards. The legs, both back and front, are cabriole in shape. The date is about 1700. The second chair has a high back and seat covered with tapestry and edged with fringe. It has cabriole legs and hoof feet and the date is about 1710.

Some of the goods are mentioned in the list of Edward Martyn, a shopkeeper of Boston, who has the following stock in 1718: "Striped Linceys, and Flowered Serges; Bay Holland Garlix and other linen Garlix and Dowlas; Holland Bayes and Duck; Musling and Cambrick; Velvet and Shalloons; Ozenbrigs, Salbafts, and Bangalls; Russell, Callimanco and Stuff Lutestring; Allimode and Searsnett; Persians and Mantua Silk; Mohair and Striped Holland and Fustian and Tick; Cherryderry and Grass; Taffety and Cantaloon; Kersey, Silk Handkerchiefs and Silk Crepes, Blue and Coloured Druggets, Calicos, blue and flowered Duroys and Sazzathees."

The Boston newspapers supply us with the following: Blue calicoes, chintzes, muzlings (1726); India damasks, chintzes, camblets, calimancoes and embossed serges (1755); horsehair and brocaded silk (1757); a pair of good green curtains (1759); beautiful painted canvas hangings for rooms (1760); yellow and crimson silk damask window curtains (1762); worsted furniture check (1764); harrateen curtains (1766); and green harrateen curtains (1773).

"Worsted damask, rich, suitable for furniture," is imported in the *Frame*; "checks for furniture" (1757); fur-



**CARVED ROSEWOOD CHAIR**

*Owned by Charles B. Tiernan Esq., Baltimore, Md. See page 638.*



100-10000  
100-10000  
100-10000  
100-10000  
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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

niture and china blue calicoes ; blue and white checks for furniture ; “ flowered damasks for furniture ” ( 1759 ) ; Turkey-work seats for chairs ( 1760 ) ; blue and green worsted damask for furniture ; “ crimson, blue, green, and yellow harrateens with lines and tassels to suit, imported in the *Albany* and sold by Henry Remsen ; Indian gimp and bindings of various sorts ( 1762 ) ; bobbing and Dutch pretties for furniture, printed cottons for furniture and furniture checks, hair cloth for chair seats and stair cases ( 1764 ) ; furniture callicoe single and in two blues, large pencill'd do. for furniture, blue and white furniture binding ” ( 1765 ) ; printed and pencill'd furniture calico, purple, dark blue, pompadour and fancy ground chintz ( 1768 ). James Nixon, Queen Street, has “ a good assortment of forest cloths with greens fit for covering tables and desks ” ( 1768 ). Fine striped lutestring for furniture, sold by Samuel Hake, Wall Street ( 1760 ) ; furniture checks lines and tassels for do. ; blue, green, scarlet, and yellow furniture checks, blue and white furniture callicoe, furniture harrateens with trimmings to suit, furniture cheney's with trimmings to suit ( 1771 ) ; worsted lutestrings, striped silk damask, handsome dark and light ground calicoes and chintzes, red and white copper plate furniture ; do., blue and white pencil do., common blue and white do., handsome red and white furniture do. ; India, English, and Patna chintzes, copper-plate cotton furniture, elegant chintz do., India chintzes for bed sprees, Marseilles quilts, red and white, blue and white, and red and white callicoe, binding, red and white, and blue and white, and purple cotton furniture ( 1772 ) ; Woodward and Kip near the Fly Market have “ fine laylock and fancy calicoes, red, blue and purple fine copper plate ditto, laylock, lutestring, light, figured, fancy, shell,

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pompadour and French ground fine chintzes. Purple, blue, and red copper plate furniture calicoes; ditto furniture bindings, black, blue, brown, Saxon, green, pea green, yellow, crimson, garnet, pink and purple moreens; blue and white, red and white, purple and white furniture calicoes, blue and white cotton and do. chintz furniture, red and white, blue and white, yellow and white, crimson and white, green and white furniture checks (1773); Patna chintzes (1774). (For the introduction of copper plate goods, see page 98.)

Other upholstery goods advertised are worsted and hair plush (1777); drapery bays (1783); striped and plain satin haircloth (1790); silk damask (1791); red chintz furniture (1802); an elegant set of crimson damask with tassels, fringe, lining and binding (1803); furniture dimities, drapery baize, balloon corded furniture dimities (1803-4); furniture moreens (1808); furniture dimity (1810); furniture chintz (1816); moreen damask cotton furniture (1817); a case of superior hair seating; a bale white bed laces, a bale cotton balls, handsome moreen window curtains, do. of chintz, dimity and silk, 60 patent spring and hair seats, moreen satin and other curtains (1823); black hair seating (1824); white cotton fringe, London furniture chintz (1825); scarlet, crimson, lemon and blue worsted damask for curtains (1825); "3 sets crimson moreen window curtains, two sets blue and orange, two of scarlet and one pearl with muslin drapery, four blue moreen window curtains with yellow drapery, scarlet moreen window curtains; 500 pair green window blinds with cornices, brackets and tassels complete, size 3 feet to 4 feet 6 in.; 1 set of blue and yellow drapery window curtains, and 3 sets crimson and blue moreen window curtains" (1826).

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Harrateen was a kind of cloth made of combing wool ; durants or durance, a stout worsted cloth ; tammy, a cotton and worsted stuff, twilled, and also called Scotch camblet. Gimp or gyp was an openwork trimming or lace, superseded by the French word *passementerie* ; and inkle was a kind of linen tape, braid, or lace, used as early as the sixteenth century ; it was also a kind of crewel, or worsted, embroidered in floral designs.

Some idea of the prices may be gained from the stock of Thomas Baxter, an upholsterer of Boston (1751), who had "Goods in the shop: 65¾ yds. Plateen, £121-18-0 ; 88 yds. Allepeen, £60-3-6 ; 269 yds. Camblett, £137-17-3 ; 28 ruggs and 11 bed quilts, £215-11-6 ; 24 lbs. brass nails, £89-18-0 ; 15 lbs. girt webb, £12 ; 247 doz. curtain rings, £15-10-0 ; 107⅞ yds. bed tick, £103-2-9 ; bed and couch bottoms, £10 ; 7 suits curtains, £96 ; 36 counterpins and coverlets, £172-15-0 ; 43½ yds. harrateen, £34-16-0 ; 1 sett tassels and fringe and 14 yds. chaney, £194-0-0 ; 18 yds. harrateen, £394-18-0 ; 44½ yds. chaney in remnants, £25-10-0 ; woodwork for a bed, £25 ; 158 pr. blankets, £49-2-6 ; 1 suit harrateen curtains, £42 ; and 29 chairs and frames, £80-10-0."

We have abundant evidence in their numerous advertisements in the papers, that the American upholsterers kept up with the latest London and Parisian styles.

Let us now examine the special styles of upholstering chairs, sofas and beds as they consecutively appear :

We find the Turkey-work chair still in the eighteenth century ; cane and leather are also used for seats ; horsehair and paduasoy (see page 104), blue silk camlet, blue chaney, mohair, yellow damask, crimson worsted, red

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china, blue leather, crimson harrateen, figured haircloth, hair plush, hair camlet and hair shags are also used. Sheraton was fond of figured silk and satin with printed ovals (see pages 478-480) and stripes. His chairs frequently matched his sofas.

For the coverings of his chairs, Chippendale advocates Spanish leather or damask nailed with brass nails, tapestry, needlework, cane bottoms and loose cushions; many of his seats are stuffed over the rails and covered with the same stuff as the window curtains and "have a Brass Border neatly chased, but are most commonly done with Brass Nails in one or two rows; and sometimes the nails are done to imitate Fretwork."

Sometimes the dimensions of the chairs vary to suit the size of the rooms; but we find the height of the back seldom exceeds 22 in. above the seats. For his French chairs, the backs and seats of which are stuffed and covered with Spanish leather or damask, "the seat is 27 in. wide from the front to the back, and 23 in. behind; the height of the back is 25 in. and the height of the seat, 14½ in. including casters." Of his famous "Ribband-Back" chairs he says: "If the seats are covered with red Morocco, they will have a fine effect."

The chair facing page 634 is an excellent example of fine contrasted colour; the framework is of carved rosewood, a wood that again became very popular about 1818. The seat and back of this chair are covered with yellow brocade. This chair belongs to Charles B. Tiernan, Esq., of Baltimore, Md., and is a family piece.

The proportions of the Heppelwhite chair are: width in front, 20 inches; depth of the seat, 17 inches; height of the seat frame, 17 inches; total height, about 3 feet 1



**CHINA CUPBOARD AND TWO SHERATON CHAIRS**

*Owned by Mrs. William Young, Baltimore, Md. See page 639.*

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## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

inch. Other dimensions are frequently adopted, "according to the size of the room or pleasure of the purchaser."

Many elegant chairs had backs and seats of red or blue morocco leather, and sometimes medallions, printed or painted on silk of the natural colours were inserted on the backs, which were often circular. "Leather backs or seats should be tied down with tassels of silk or thread" is another instruction for the Heppelwhite chair.

Among the examples of Heppelwhite chairs represented on pages 461, 465 and 467, and facing 92 and 454, we may call attention to those on page 467, which are correctly upholstered, especially with regard to the brass nails on the chair to the left. Silk, satin, leather or horse-hair (striped, figured, checked or plain) are the appropriate materials for this style of chair.

Sheraton chairs occur on pages 272 (left), 429 and 435.

Those on pages 473 and 475 and facing 638 are covered correctly with striped materials. In his late years, he made Herculaneums and "conversation chairs" (see pages 483-4), and many curious designs. "Conversation chairs" are advertised in America. (See page 539.)

Two excellent Sheraton chairs correctly upholstered face page 638 in company with a "beaufait" or china cupboard of much more recent date than those on pages 354 and 363 and facing page 352. This, however, contains many examples of fine china tastefully arranged. One of the chairs is upholstered with a brocade of varied hues, and the other is of yellow silk and satin in stripes. These pieces are owned by Mrs. William Young, in Baltimore, Md. Another "Beaufait" appears in the room facing page 632. It is interesting to compare these chairs with those on pages 473 and 475.

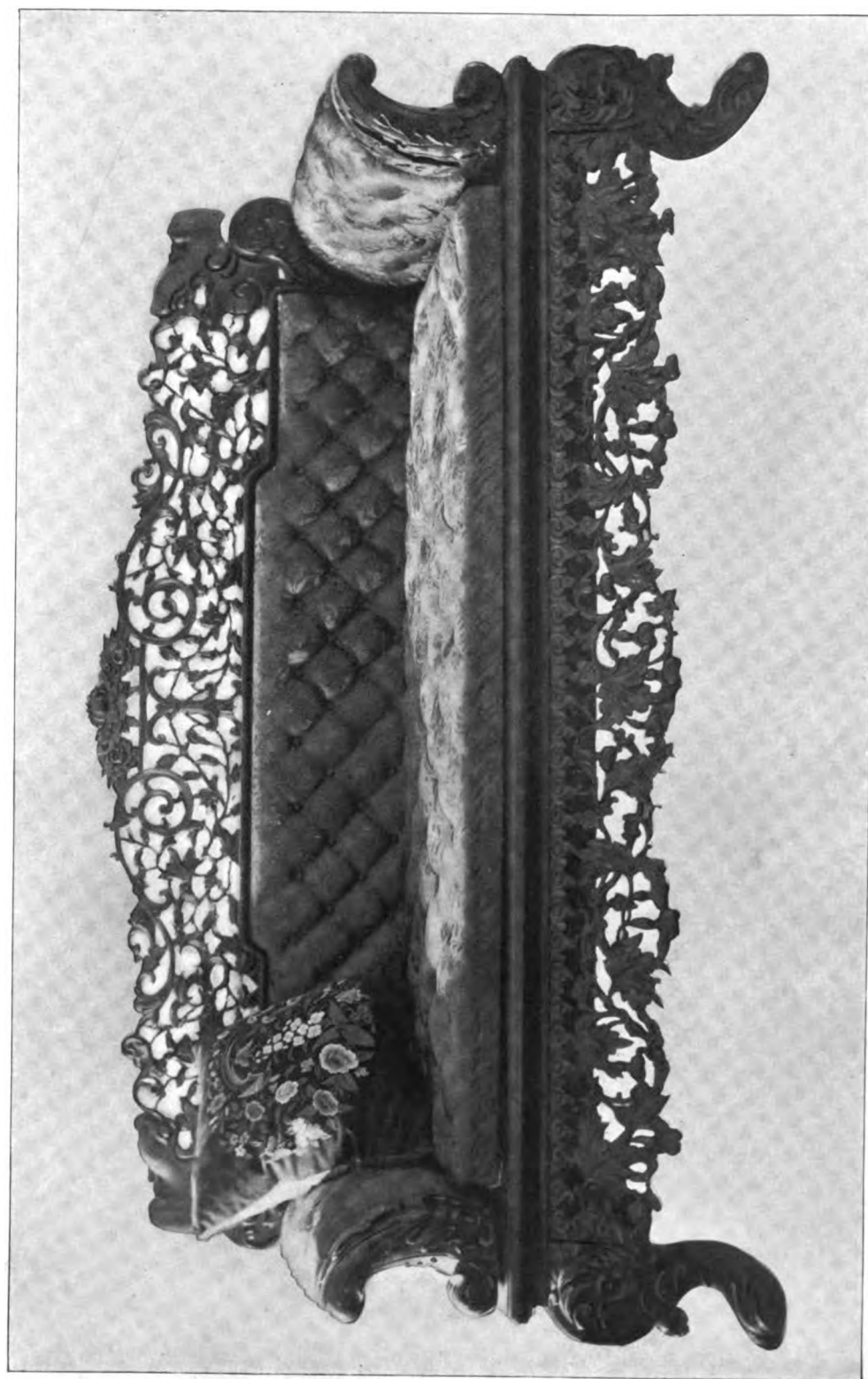


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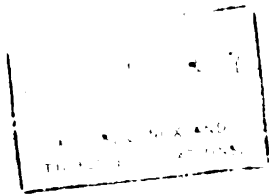
From about the beginning of the nineteenth century, the favourite chair was the "Fancy Chair." This was, however, introduced in New York as early as 1797, when William Challen, Fancy Chair-maker from London, "manufactures all sorts of dyed, japanned, wangee and bamboo chairs, settees, etc., and every article in the fancy chair line executed in the neatest manner, and after the newest and most approved London patterns."

In 1802, William Palmer, 2 Nassau Street, New York, advertises "a large assortment of elegant, well-made and highly finished black and gold, etc., Fancy Chairs, with cane and rush bottoms; in 1806, William Mott, 51 Broadway, furniture japanner, "has a large assortment of elegant and well-made fancy chairs of the newest patterns." Richard Marsh, Greenwich Street, has the same year fancy and Windsor chairs for sale, and will repair, panel and ornament old chairs; Patterson and Dennis, 54 John Street, inform their friends that that they have "a large and very elegant assortment of Fancy chairs of the newest patterns and finished in a superior style. Elegant white, coquilicot, green, etc., and gilt drawing-room chairs, with cane and rush seats, together with a handsome assortment of dining and bedroom chairs, etc."

In 1812, Asa Holden, 32 Broad Street, has "a superb assortment of highly finished fancy chairs, such as double and single cross fret chain gold, ball and spindle back, with cane and rush seats, etc., of the latest and most fashionable patterns;" and in 1814, he advertises again. In 1817, William Shureman, 17 Bowery, has "fancy and Windsor chairs," and will paint and re-gild old chairs; in the same year Wharton and Davies, fancy chair manufacturers, offer for sale an elegant assortment of curled maple

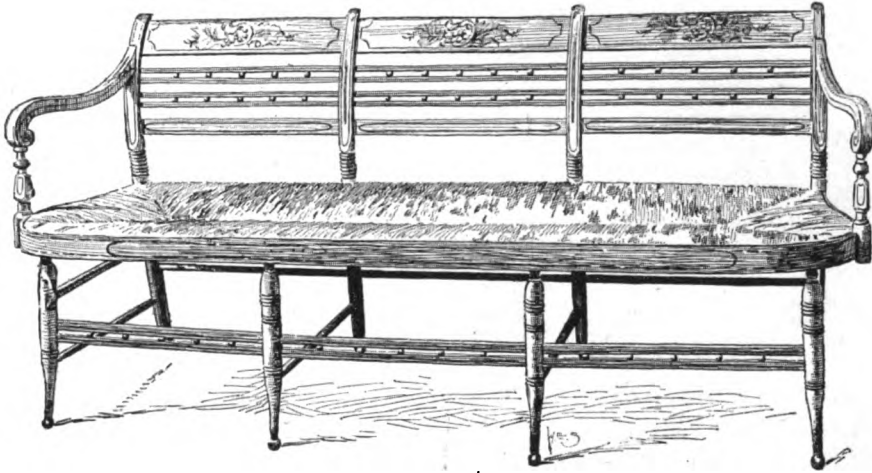


**CARVED EBONY SOFA**  
*Owned by Mrs. Caleb T. Smith, Smithtown, L. I. See page 590.*



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painted, ornamented landscape, sewing and rocking chairs, lounges, settees, sofas, music stools, etc. In 1819, they have curled maple, rosewood and fancy painted chairs and sofas richly ornamented in gold and bronze with hair, cane and rush seats.



“FANCY” SETTEE

Owned by Mrs. Edward Rankin at *Cherry Hill*, Albany, New York. See below.

“Fancy Chairs” have already been represented on page 119, second from the left; and on page 475 on the right of the letter-case.

A settee that was a companion to the “Fancy Chair” appears on this page. This belongs to Mrs. Edward Rankin at *Cherry Hill*, Albany, N. Y. A chair that came in under the Empire, and finds its origin in Egyptian and Greek models, quickly took the place of all the old Chipendale, Heppelwhite and Sheraton models, and held its own as the typical dining-room chair almost to the present day. This was the “Trafalgar Chair,” which received its name from that action, which occurred very soon after

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its introduction. The pattern, which is familiar to everybody, occurs facing page 562 (on the left).

In 1814, the fashion was :

“Light chairs for best bedchambers (cane seats), secondary drawing-rooms and occasionally to serve for routs. These may be stained black, or, as the present taste is, veined with vitriol, stained with logwood, and polished to imitate rosewood ; the seats caned.”

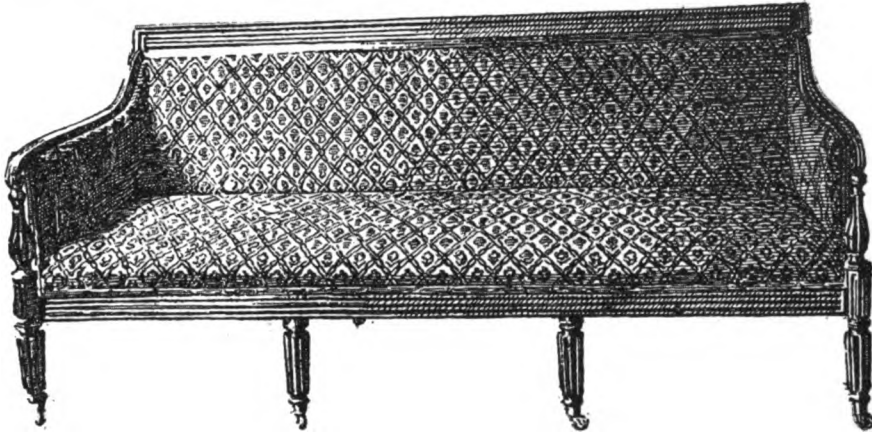
Regarding sofas, Heppelwhite says their dimensions should vary according to the size of the room and pleasure of the purchaser, but “the proportion in general use” is, length between 6 and 7 feet ; depth about 30 inches ; height of the seat frame, 14 inches ; total in the back, 3 feet 1 inch. The woodwork should be either mahogany or japanned to suit the chairs in the room, and the covering must match that of the chairs. Four designs of sofas appear in his book.

He also gives designs for the *Confidante* and the *Duchesse*, two species of sofa. Of the first he says: “This piece of furniture is of French origin, and is in pretty general request for large and spacious suits of apartments. An elegant drawing-room, with modern furniture, is scarce complete without a *Confidante*, the extent of which may be about nine feet, subject to the same regulations as sofas. This piece of furniture is sometimes so constructed that the ends take away and leave a regular sofa ; the ends may be used as “*Barjier Chairs*.”

Of the *Duchesse*, he writes: “This piece of furniture is also derived from the French. Two *Barjier* chairs of proper construction, with a stool in the middle, form the *Duchesse*, which is allotted to large and spacious ante-rooms ; the covering may be various, as also the frame-

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work, and made from six to eight feet long. The stuffing may be of the round manner as shown in the drawing, or low-stuffed with a loose squab or bordered cushion fitted to each part; with a duplicate linen cover to cover the whole, or each part separately, Confidantes, sofas and chairs may be stuffed in the same manner."



MAHOGANY SOFA

Owned by Mrs. John Sparhawk Jones, Philadelphia. See page 645.

His graceful "Window stools" are made of mahogany or they are japanned. He recommends two of his designs "to be covered with linen or cotton to match the chairs." The covering of one is tufted and caught with buttons. The other has a scalloped valance edged with fringe, and in the centre of each scallop hangs a tiny tassel. Another stool he wishes japanned and covered "with striped furniture"; another, of carved mahogany, "with furniture of an elegant pattern festooned in front, will produce a very pleasing effect." Two other window stools "are particularly adapted for an elegant drawing-room of japanned furniture; the covering should be of taberry or morine of pea-green or other light colour. The size of the window

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stools must be regulated by the size of the place where they are to stand; their heights should not exceed the heights of the chairs."

Sheraton gave much attention to the sofa (see page 482). One is a "Sofa done in white and gold, or japanned. Four loose cushions are placed at the back. They serve at times for bolsters, being placed against the arms to loll against. The seat is stuffed up in front about three inches high above the rail, denoted by the figure of the sprig running lengthwise; all above that is a squab, which may be taken off occasionally."

Turkey sofas "introduced into the most fashionable houses" are a novelty. They are "an imitation of the Turkish mode of sitting. They are, therefore, made very low, scarcely exceeding a foot to the upper side of the cushion. The frame may be made of beech, and must be webbed and strained with canvas to support the cushions."

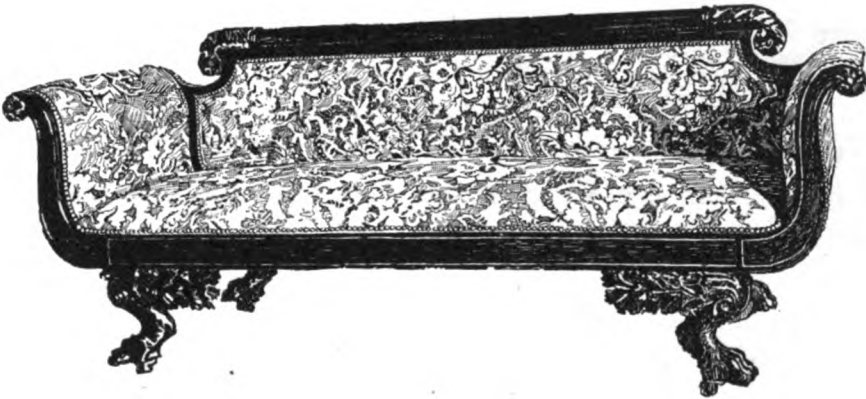
Sheraton also makes the *Chaise Longue*, which he says derive their name "long chair" from the French and "their use is to rest or loll upon after dinner."

In 1821, the fashionable sofa is thus described: "For decorations of the highest class the frame work would be entirely gilt in burnished and matt gold, the pillows and covering of satin damask or velvet, relieved by wove gold lace and tassels. For furniture of less splendour the frames would be of rosewood, with the carved work partly gilt and the covering of more simple materials.

"The loom of our country is now in that advanced state of perfection that damasks of the most magnificent kind in point of intensity of colour and richness of pattern are manufactured at prices that permit their free use in well-furnished apartments."

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The four sofas appearing on pages 573, 643, 649 and below are interesting studies for comparison. The one on page 643, owned by Mrs. John Sparhawk Jones, of Philadelphia, is of the Sheraton model (see page 481). The Empire sofa, owned by Mrs. William Young, Baltimore, Md., on page 573 is a fine example of the period, with its metal dolphins gracefully curved along the scroll ends; the third, owned by the Worcester Society of Antiquity, is



MAHOGANY SOFA

Owned by Mr. Thompson S. Grant, Enfield, Conn. See below.

a fine instance of the awkward, clumsy and heavy designs that succeeded the Empire and Grecian periods. The legs are particularly ungraceful; the swan's neck is used as a design for the scroll ends. The fourth, owned by Mr. Thompson S. Grant, Enfield, Conn., is a good type of the sofa still familiar in many old houses, and might have been made anywhere from 1820 to 1840.

Some of the most popular hangings for beds were crimson damask, blue, yellow, crimson and green harra-teen, yellow camlet lined with silk and laced, yellow watered worsted, crimson mohair, crimson worsted, green



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china, crimson damask, yellow silk damask, wrought fustian, moreen and russell of various colours, dornix, worsted damask, camlet, callimanco, worked fustian, flowered damask and russells, blue and green flowered russell damask, flowered tabby, and dark say. Besides the above materials, which were of silk or worsted, or a mixture of each, there was a large variety of cotton goods such as dimity, plain, figured and corded; India and English chintz; Patna chintz; and many kinds of copperplate furniture, made of cotton stamped with pictures. The latter was imported from England as early as 1758 (see also page 280). For decoration, silk fringe and "snail trimming" of all colours, gimp and inkle were used and the "lines and tassels" that the upholsterers advertise so frequently after the middle of the century show plainly that the curtains are submitting to the decree of fashion. The old square valance is disappearing and the draperies are hung in festoons and ornamented with conventional swags and rosettes, and drawn up or down by means of ingenious pullies and cords. The period might be termed the age of upholstery, if we may judge from the plates and descriptions of beds given by Chippendale, Heppelwhite and Sheraton alone. Chippendale gives "Dome Beds," "Canopy Beds," "Gothic Beds," "Chinese Beds," "Couch Beds" and "Tent Beds." He gives separate designs for their pillows and cornices carved with his favourite ornaments. Sometimes the cornices are gilt, and again "covered with the same stuff as the curtains," and the latter "can be made to draw up in drapery or to run on a rod."

In every one of his designs, the cornice and draperies are very important, as is also the arrangement of the laths and pullies to draw up the curtains, for the latter had to

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arrange themselves into symmetrical festoons and loops when drawn up. He makes great use of the cord and tassel. As a rule, his beds are 6 ft. 7 in. long and 6 ft. wide; while the pillars are 8 ft. 6 in. high. The "furniture" of all the tent bedsteads "is made to take off and the laths are hung with hinges for the convenience of folding up." His sofas, or couch beds, were intricate: a design of a sofa has "a Chinese Canopy with Curtains and Valances tied up in Drapery, and may be converted into a Bed by making the front part of the seat to draw forward, and the sides made to fold and turn in with strong iron hinges and a proper stretcher to keep out and support the sides when open. The curtains must be likewise made to come forward, and when let down will form a Tent."

Another bed Chippendale describes is a "Couch with Canopy. The Curtains must be made to draw up in Drapery, or to let down, when it is occasionally converted into a Bed. This sort of Couch is very fit for alcoves, or such deep Recesses as are often seen in large Apartments. It may also be placed at the end of a long gallery. If the Curtains and Valances are adorned with a large gold Fringe and Tassels, and the ornaments gilt with burnished gold, it will look very grand."

The "field-bed" had early lost its character of being suited only for the tented camp. It was, however, lighter than the four-post bedstead with cornice and tester. Light curved bars joining the tops of the posts formed a kind of dome for the curtains; thus the "field-bed" probably took its name from the resemblance it retained to the tent.

In 1736, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Harward of Boston owned a "field bedstead with blue curtains, £8." Fifty

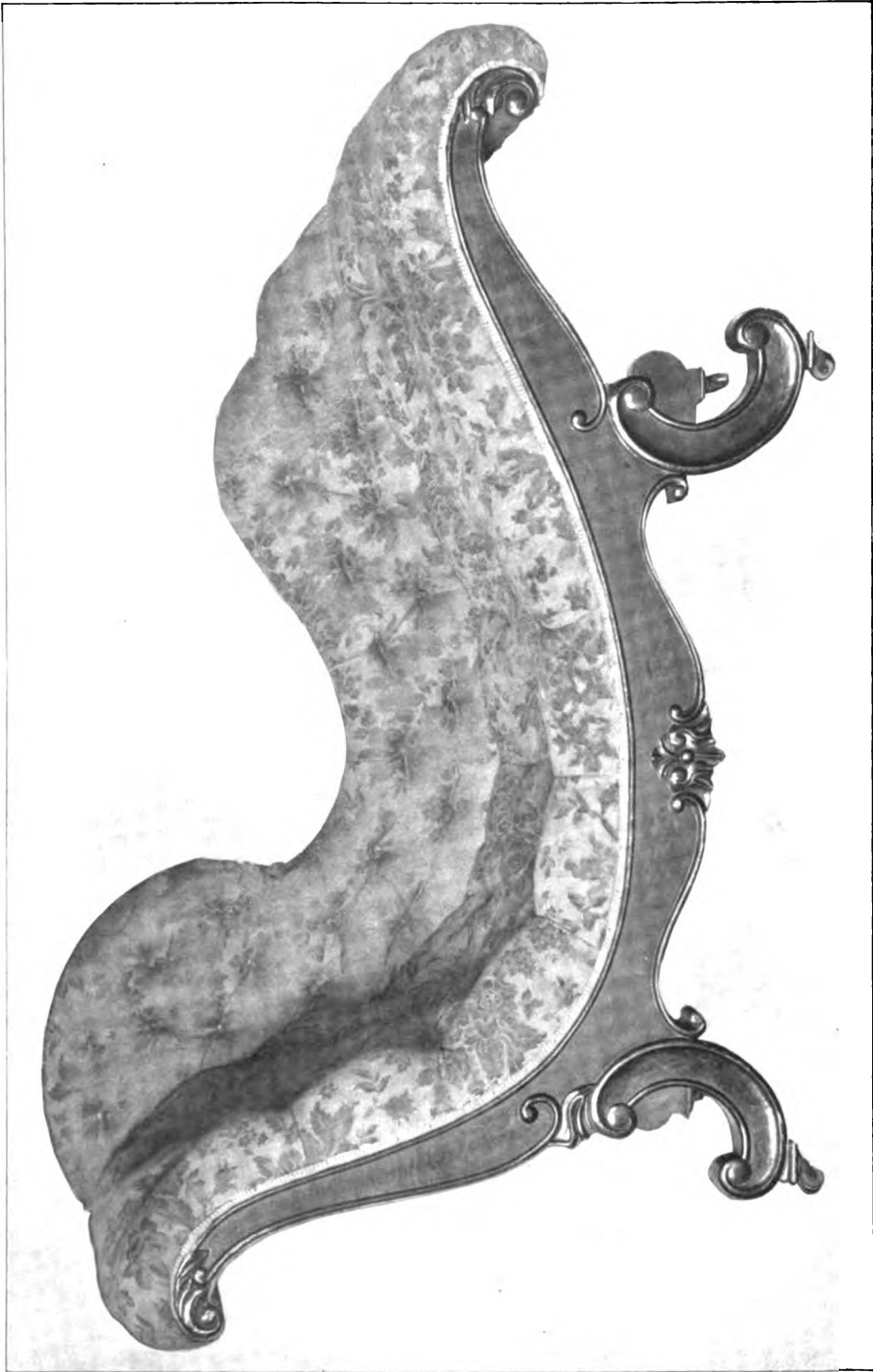
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years later Heppelwhite supplies designs for "sweeps" for the tops, and, perhaps, contributes materially to making the field-bed fashionable. A "Heppelwhite" bed with one of his characteristic "sweeps" appears on page 454. According to Heppelwhite's design, the top central bar and the two side posts are surmounted by urns. The curtains, of course, are equally divided by falling from the centre of the dome straight down along the side of the bed. The one to the left is thrown back and looped over an ornamental staple. The counterpane should be stretched tightly across the bed, and the petticoat valance hang in rigid folds. The bolster, which the looped-back curtain exhibits, should be a long narrow roll. There are no pillows. Some of the field bedsteads had the tops sloped from the head to the foot.

We find the field-bed, made of mahogany and curled maple, advertised as late as 1826, in company with high-post and French bedsteads.

In addition to the "Field-bed," Heppelwhite gives designs of the "Venetian or Waggon Top," "Dome Top," "Square Dome Top," and "Press Beds," which fold, and are similar to a wardrobe in shape.

All of these beds, Heppelwhite tells us, "may be executed of almost every stuff the loom produces. White dimity, plain or corded, is peculiarly applicable for the furniture, which, with a fringe or gymp-head, produces an effect of elegance and neatness truly agreeable. The Manchester stuffs have been wrought into Bed-furniture with good success. Printed cottons and linens are also very suitable." In general he recommends plain white cotton for lining the draperies, and states that for furniture of a dark pattern "a green silk lining may be used with good



**SOFA**

*Owned by Mrs. J. Adair Pleasant, Richmond, Va. See page 654.*



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effect," and adds, a bed with "dove-coloured satin-curtains and green silk lining would afford as much scope for taste, elegance and simplicity as the most capricious fancy can wish." Yet Heppelwhite cared little or nothing for cold white bed furniture in luxurious apartments, as will be seen from his following instructions :



SOFA

Owned originally by Charles C. Pratt of Worcester ; now by the Worcester Society of Antiquity, Worcester, Mass. See page 645.

“In staterooms where a high degree of elegance and grandeur are wanted, beds are frequently made of silk or satin figured or plain, also of velvet with gold fringe, etc.

“The Vallance to elegant beds should always be gathered full, which is called a Petticoat Vallance. The Cornices may be either of mahogany carved, carved or gilt, or painted and japanned. The ornaments over the cornices may be in the same manner.

“Arms or other ornaments to Stuffed Head Boards should be carved in small relief, gilt and burnished. The Pillars should be of mahogany, with the embellishments carved.”

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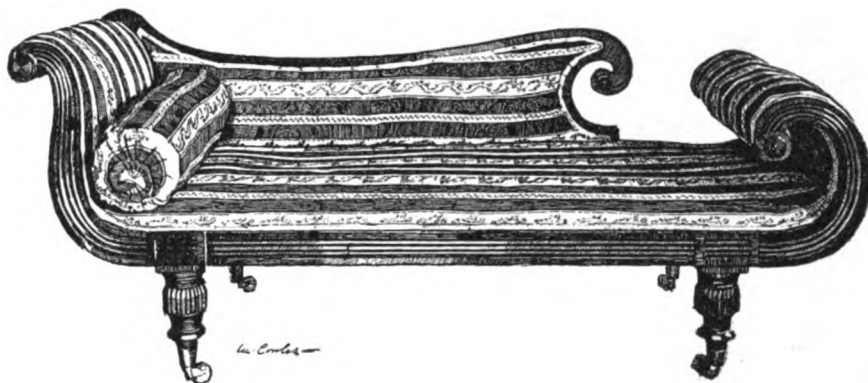
One design for a bed with a "sweep top, with gilt ornaments or mahogany, shows a stuffed headboard with ornaments and drapery over it." The curtains falling from the cornice hang over this again. "The drapery," Heppelwhite says, "may be the same as the furniture or the lining: the ornaments gilt; the headboard is stuffed and projects like the back of a sofa. The addition of stuffed headboards gives an elegant and high finish to the appearance of beds."

Sheraton carries upholstery still further in the decoration of his bedsteads. Indeed, with him the frame becomes of comparatively little importance. He was particularly fond of the dome (see page 483). His book contains several complicated beds. Of the French State Bed, he says: "Beds of this kind have been introduced of late with great success in England," and goes on to describe that "the dome is supported by iron rods of about an inch in diameter, curved regularly down to each pillar where they are fixed with a strong screw and nut. These iron rods are covered and entirely hid by a valance, which comes in a regular sweep, and meets in a point at the vases on the pillars. Behind this valance, which continues all round, the drapery is drawn up by pulleys and tied up by a silken cord and tassels at the head of the pillars. The headboards of these beds are framed and stuffed, and covered to suit the hangings, and the frame is white and gold, if the pillars and cornice are. The bed-frame is sometimes ornamented, and has drapery valances below. Observe that grooves are made in the pillars to receive the headboards, and screwed at the top, by which means the whole is kept firm, and is easily taken to pieces. Square bolsters, are now often introduced, with margins of vari-

## THE FURNITURE OF OUR FOREFATHERS

ous colours stitched all round. The counterpane has also these margins; they are also fringed at bottom, and have sometimes a drapery tied up in cords and tassels on the side." Then he describes the "sofa-bed" as follows:

"The frames of these beds are sometimes painted in ornaments to suit the furniture. But when the furniture is of such rich silk, they are done in white and gold, and



SOFA

Owned by Mrs. H. John Symonds, Charleston, S. C. See page 654.

the ornaments carved. The tablets may each have a festoon of flowers or foliage, and the cornice cut out in leaves and gilt has a good effect. The drapery under the cornice is of the French kind; it is fringed all round, and laps on to each other like unto waves. The valance serves as a ground, and is also fringed. The roses which tuck up the curtains are formed by silk cord, etc., on the wall, to suit the hangings; and observe that the centre rose contains a brass hook and socket, which will unhook so that the curtains will come forward and entirely enclose the whole bed. The sofa part is sometimes made without any



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back, in the manner of a couch. It must also be observed that the best kinds of these beds have behind what the upholsterers call a fluting, which is done by a slight frame of wood fastened to the wall, on which is strained in straight puckers, some of the same stuff of which the curtains are made."

Sheraton's bed stood very high from the floor and needed bed-steps. In describing his "alcove bed," he says: "The steps are introduced to show that beds of this sort are raised high and require something to step on before they can be got into. The steps are generally covered with carpet and framed in mahogany. Both this, the sofa, and French state bed require steps. The dome of this bed is fixed in the same manner as the other; but the roses to which the curtains are tucked up are different. This is made of tin and covered with the stuff of the bed, and unbuckles to take in the curtains behind the rose. Upon the fluting, as before mentioned, is fixed a drapery in this as shown in the design; and sometimes in the arch of the alcove a drapery is introduced."

The Empire bed and the "French bed," of which we give a few descriptions (see pages 653-4), are no less dependent on draperies for their effect than the above kinds which they supplanted.

Let us take a few more examples: in 1816, a *lit de repos*, or sofa bed, "has a peculiar character of unaffected ease, and is not without its full claim to elegance. The sofa is of the usual construction and the draperies are thrown over a sceptre rod projecting from the walls of the apartment: they are of silk, as is the *courte pointe* also." The one who is describing it says: "In fashions as in manners it sometimes happens that one extreme immedi-

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ately usurps the place of the other, without regarding their intervening degrees of approximation. For the precise in dress the French have adopted the *déshabille*; and it has been applied to their articles of furniture in many instances, giving to them an air which amateurs term *négligé*." Another fashionable bed of the same year is made of rosewood ornamented with carved foliage, gilt in matt and burnished gold. The drapery is of rose-coloured silk lined with azure blue, and consists of one curtain gathered up at the ring in the centre of the canopy, being full enough to form the festoons and curtains both of the head and foot. The elegance of this bed greatly depends on the choice, arrangement and modification of the three primitive colours, blue, yellow and red; and in the combination of these its chasteness or gaiety may be augmented or abridged." The curtain was edged with fringe. A small bed intended for the apartment of a young lady of fashion had hangings of a "light blue silk, the ornaments being of a tender shade of brown and the linings to correspond; they are supported by rings and rods of brass, behind which the curtains are suspended and drawn up by silk cords enriched with tassels." A fourth "English bed" of this same year has beautiful curtains of pea green, pale poppy and canary. This is designed by Mr. G. Bulloch, and the critic approves of it by saying: "The abandonment of that profusion of drapery which has long been fashionable has admitted this more chastened style in point of forms, and has introduced a richness in point of colours that has long been neglected."

In 1817, a canopy or sofa bed has draperies of silk "ornamented with the lace and fringe which are so admirable an imitation of gold; the linings are lilac and

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buff. A muslin embroidered drapery is applied as a covering in the daytime. The outside curtains that fall from a kind of crown are dark green."

We learn that, in 1822, "the taste for French furniture is carried to such an extent that most elegantly furnished mansions, particularly the sleeping-rooms, are fitted up in the French style; and we must confess that, while the antique forms the basis of their decorative and ornamental furniture, it will deservedly continue in repute." The sofa or French bed, "designed and decorated in the French style," which is selected as an example, is said to be adapted for apartments of superior elegance." It is "highly ornamented with Grecian ornaments, in burnished and matt gold. The cushions and inner coverlids are of white satin. The outer covering is of muslin in order to display the ornaments to advantage, and bear out the richness of the canopy. The dome is composed of alternate pink and gold fluting, surrounded with ostrich feathers, forming a novel, light and elegant effect; the drapery is green satin with a salmon-coloured lining."

The curiously shaped sofa, facing page 648, dates from about 1825 or 1830, and is properly known as a "Psyche" and also as a "Kangaroo." The frame is of mahogany. This is owned by Mrs. J. Adair Pleasants, Richmond, Va.

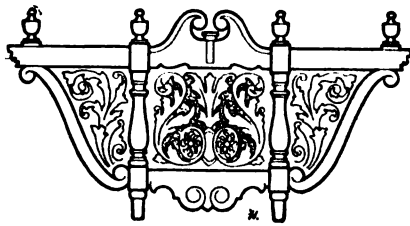
The sofa, on page 651, belonging to Mrs. John Symonds, Charleston, S. C., is similar in many respects to models that appear in English periodicals of fashion in 1821. It is of mahogany and striped silk of white and pale green. The late Empire characteristics are still observable.

The settee, on the frontispiece, is of mahogany, with stuffed seat covered with printed velvet. This belongs to the Chippendale school and dates from the second half

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of the eighteenth century. The frame is elaborately carved with a leaf design and rosettes, and the central panel, which is of the old jar-shape, is pierced with a scroll forming the figure eight in two sizes. The arms are curved. Six cabriole legs support the settee, the front ones being carved at the spring and ending in volutes. This handsome piece is owned by the Museum of Science and Art, Dublin.

The illustration facing page 632 is a room in the home of Mrs. John Marshall Holcombe, Hartford, Conn. The house was built in 1815: of the woodwork in this room the wainscotting alone is new. The chairs are of the Chippendale school; the inlaid sideboard is of the Heppelwhite period (with modern handles); the looking-glass above it is carved and gilt; and the clock on the mantel-piece is Empire. The handsomest piece of furniture is the mahogany table, which is an extraordinarily fine example.





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